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The Editors: 'No' On Bork

HENRY FAIRLIE ON TIP O'NEILL • WHO'S AFRAID OF JACQUES DERRIDA?

THE POPE AND THE REAL AMERICA

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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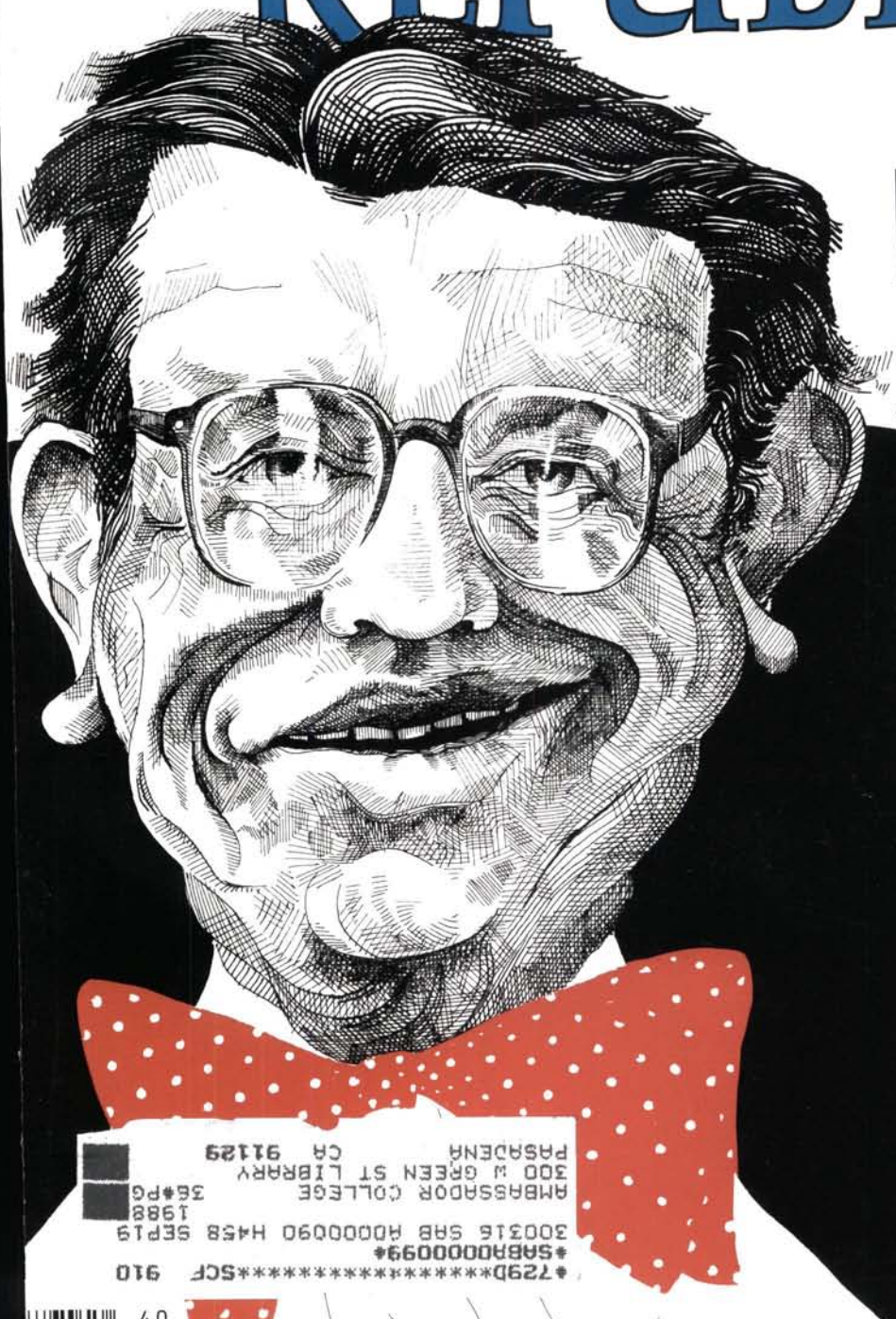

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By Fred Barnes

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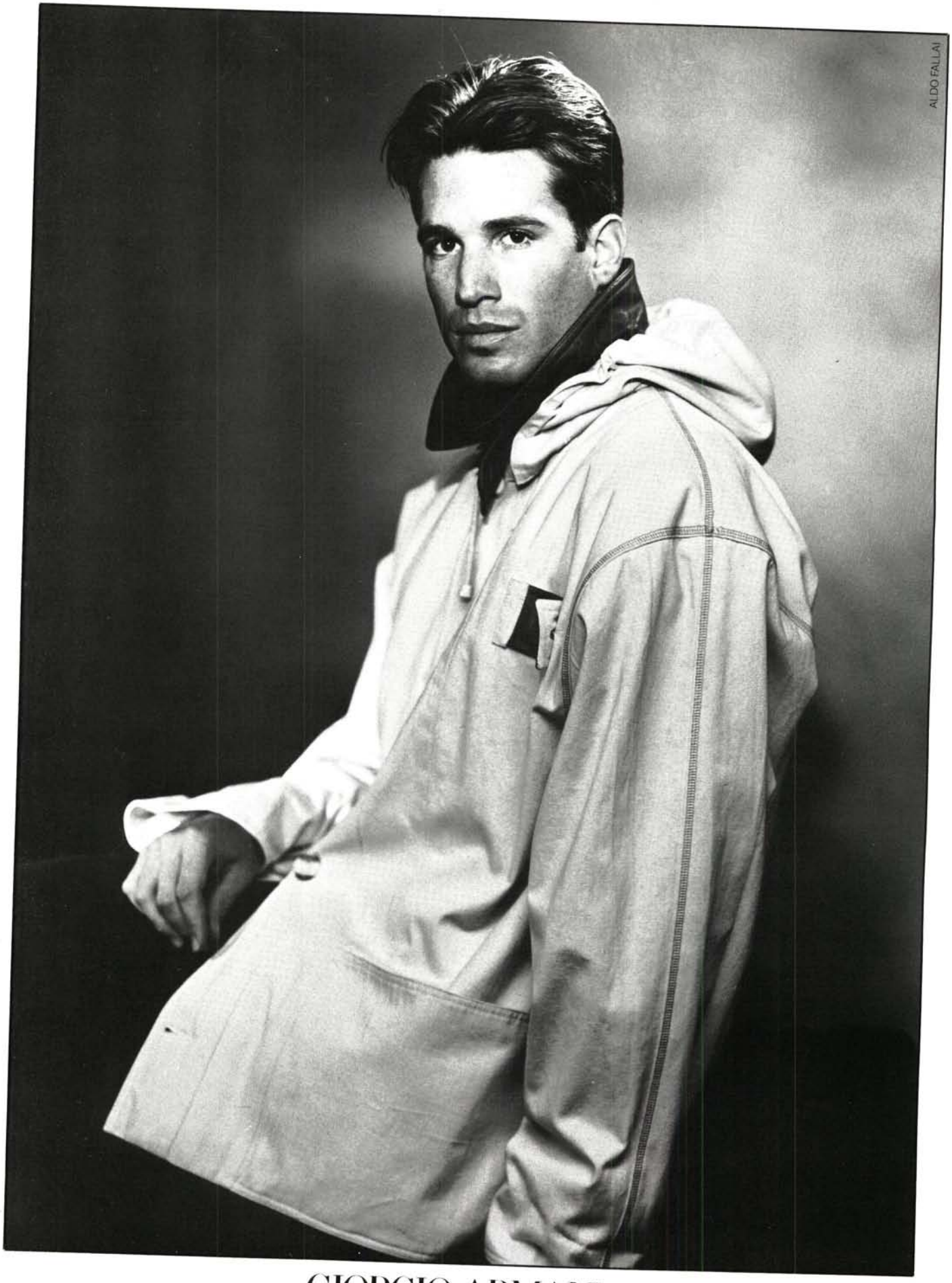

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

NO, NO NORIEGA

The regular author of TRB is working on another assignment. This column was written by Morton M. Kondracke.

What on earth are the Democrats going to do for issues in 1988? Iranamok may have damaged Ronald Reagan's credibility, but it has no staying power as an election issue. It looks as though the economy will stay afloat for another year, so the Republican candidate will say to the Democrat: "You guys wanted to raise taxes as far back as 1983. Now you want protectionism. Where will our prosperity be if we follow you?" There is likely to be at least one arms control treaty with the Soviets, and the Republican candidate will be able to say: "You were against the MX, the B-1, and SDI. You favored a nuclear freeze. What kind of bargain would we have worked out with the Soviets if you'd been in charge?"

Well, there's always human rights. Democrats fancy themselves as more moral than Republicans, more peace-seeking and less militaristic. If the public is furious about the *contra* war, then the Democrats may have an issue. It's dicey, though. If congressional Democrats cut off aid to the *contras* this fall, the matter will be forgotten by next fall, provided nothing terrible happens. If a disaster ensues—say, hundreds of thousands of refugees stream to the United States or the Sandinistas let Soviet spy planes use their territory—then the Republican candidate will say to the Democrat: "You did it."

Politically and practically, the best course for the Democrats might be to keep the *contras* alive through the 1988 election. They'd be an election issue—and, in truth, they ought to be. The *contra* war and all it implies—the use of force, the right of the United States to depose foreign governments—constitute a fundamental divide in American politics that the voters ought to have a chance to pronounce upon. Even here, however, the Democrats' hand is weakened. They used to be able to claim that the *contras* were evidence of a preference by Reaganites and Republicans for right-wing dictatorships. Many still try to portray the administration as wedded to the Kirkpatrick doctrine that the United States should side with "authoritarian" dictators and oppose "totalitarian" ones. But it won't wash. There is too much evidence on the record now that the Reaganites favor democracy—and maybe even that they are better at helping it along than Democrats are.

What are the Democrats going to say about the trend? On Reagan's watch, the following countries have moved out of dictatorship and toward democracy: Argentina (1983), Bolivia (1982), Brazil (1985), El Salvador (1984), Grenada (1983), Guatemala (1985), Haiti (1986), Honduras (1982), the Philippines (1986), and Uruguay (1984). The Democrats can say that Reagan was irrelevant in many cases, especially in South America; that he's been too little in some places (El Salvador and Guatemala) and almost too late in others (the Philippines). And, they might say, he's just been lucky in other places, such as South Korea (1987), which is close to adding itself to the list above.

The truth is that the Reaganites have been nudging dictators, cautioning military commanders, and encouraging democrats from Seoul to San Salvador. Administration officials say that Kirkpatrick was misunderstood. "We do prefer authoritarians to totalitarians," said one. "But we prefer democracy above all, and so does Jeane."

The decisive proof of this preference is taking shape in Chile and Panama, where the administration is trying to ease out two of the world's worst despots, Augusto Pinochet and Manuel Noriega.

In Panama the administration backed a rigged election result in 1984, believing it to be a "transition." But when the civilian front-man president, Nicolas Ardito Barletta, was fired for saying he would investigate the murder of oppositionist Hugo Spadafora, the administration turned. The U.S. government was a major source of a Seymour Hersh series in the *New York Times* exposing Noriega as a tyrant, a drug-trafficker, a source for Cuban intelligence and front for Cuban evasions of the U.S. economic boycott, and a gunrunner for Communist guerrillas in Colombia.

The United States has frozen economic and military aid, sided with the Civic Crusade seeking to oust Noriega, and called (through the U.S. Embassy and speeches by Secretary of State George Shultz and Assistant Secretary Elliott Abrams) for an end to military rule. "We recognize that it's essential for Panama to have a strong professional armed force, and we support that," said Shultz. "But we believe the armed forces should be professional and not political."

The U.S. design is to put enough political and economic pressure on Panama that Noriega's fellow military officers will ask him to leave. "We don't say publicly that he's got to go," one official said. "In private conversation we say he's more part of the problem than the solution. . . . But our view is, he's got to go." Similarly in Chile, where Pinochet apparently plans to remain in power until the late 1990s by holding a plebiscite in 1988 or 1989, the administration is both encouraging the opposition, which is organizing a "Vote No" campaign, and angling to get military leaders to replace Pinochet with a transition figure.

Democrats in Congress accuse the administration of being soft on Pinochet because it abstains—instead of voting no—on World Bank loans and urges resumption of military training programs. Administration officials say that a failing economy would only help Chilean radicals, and that it's vital to maintain contact with the Chilean military. The dictator does have an ally in U.N. Ambassador Vernon Walters, but Shultz and Abrams are resolutely against him. There is a debate inside the administration about whether to declare publicly that Pinochet must go. It probably won't, for fear of giving Pinochet the opportunity to portray himself as a nationalist.

Both Noriega and Pinochet are under no illusions about U.S. policy. In reaction, Noriega is nesting in with Nicaragua and Cuba, posing as a progressive and denouncing U.S. imperialism. Pinochet is claiming he's a target of both the CIA and the KGB. If one can't believe that the Republicans have become democrats, listen to them.

So, what's the hope for the Democrats? There's one: to have a more forceful nominee who would declare, "Yes, the Republicans have been good for democracy, but I'll be better."

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CORRESPONDENCE

WORKFARE IN ACTION

To the editors:
"Workfare That Works" (August 24) clearly outlines the evolving politics of welfare reform but makes no reference to H.R. 1720, the Family Welfare Reform Act of 1987. The bill's main priority is to reduce welfare dependency by creating significant work, education, and training programs for AFDC recipients. H.R. 1720 makes the establishment of these programs a condition for receiving federal funds under the Social Security Act, giving states a real reason to implement them. Second, the bill makes the unemployed parent program, which extends benefits to two-parent families, mandatory nationwide. Third, H.R. 1720 encourages those states with low benefit levels to raise their benefits by providing a higher federal matching rate for AFDC benefit increases. In addition, this act eases the transition from welfare to jobs by providing transitional day care and Medicaid subsidies for families who earn their way off welfare. Like Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's bill, this does not meet all the goals of welfare reform advocates, but it does represent a significant reorientation of our national welfare policy.

THOMAS J. DOWNEY
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:
TNR's view that women be forced to leave their babies in day-care centers in order to receive welfare is very disturbing. No doubt some welfare children would be better off in well-run day-care facilities than at home. But that is not usually the alternative. Even if your proposal to build scores of day-care centers were adopted, they would probably be staffed by the same idealistic teachers, earth mothers, and dregs of the economy who work in today's day-care centers. Instead of institutionalizing babies, we should treat motherhood as a profession, paying mothers who need public assistance to work as mothers. We could provide job training, and hold welfare mothers to some professional standards. To require that mothers of young school-age children hold part-time jobs, and, when their children are older, full-time jobs, is reasonable. But to require mothers to leave their babies to the often indifferent ministrations of day-care workers is a callous cruelty certain to backfire.

KARIN CHENOWETH
Silver Spring, Maryland

TOO COOL ON DUKAKIS

To the editors:
At last a Democrat who fits the bill emerges from the pack—even gets called the front-runner by *Newsweek*. Yet Morton Kondracke's blasé attitude toward Michael Dukakis leaves the impression that he was dragged out of bed to write "Cool Hand Duke" (August 31). Dukakis may lack the oratory of New York's Mario Cuomo, but frankly he has been a better governor. And he's a better politician, and more electable. Dukakis is competent. He has a track record. He's bright, and he has no skeletons in his closet (an important point in this post-Hart era). A little more enthusiasm, please, for a candidate who's as good as they get.

DAN KAPLAN
Jefferson, Massachusetts

COSTLY VOTES

To the editors:
Even before reading Robert Kuttner's "Why Americans Don't Vote" (September 7) I had decided not to vote in the 1988 presidential elections. In 1964, at the age of 22 and classified 1-A for the draft, I cast my first vote in a federal election. I voted for the Democratic "peace" candidate Lyndon Johnson and against the conservative Republican warrior Barry Goldwater. My candidate won—and months later I was sent to Vietnam. By 1980, loathing Democrats and concerned about the size of the public debt, I voted for Ronald Reagan. Once again my candidate won—and years later we have a debauched government following a course of fiscal suicide. On Election Day in 1988 I'm going to stay home. I can't afford to win again.

JAMES J. DALY
Fergus Falls, Minnesota

SEEING RED AT BROWN

To the editors:
"Red and Brown" (Notebook, August 24) observes that in Brown University's associating its Center for Foreign Policy Development with the U.S.S.R. Institute of the USA and Canada, an intelligence organization, "the skeptical intelligence of academics is nowhere in evidence." That sound observation points to a flaw in the university, one that has permitted Thomas Watson to do almost anything, through the administration of his president, Howard Swearer. Brown is run by a president who can do virtually whatever he wants. In good times the result is the conduct of affairs through trust and consensus, in place of instruments of faculty governance. But in bad times the president ignores the faculty and creates institutes, programs, and departments pretty much at will. That is what has happened here. As you surmise, the faculty has had no vote on these things, for the administration of President Swearer has alienated and isolated it. When, years ago, Brown entered an agreement with the East German University of Rostok, a professor asked how these two universities fell into the same classification, e.g., as to academic freedom, and got no answer. That represented the administration's established policy of isolating either its critics, by ignoring them, or itself. More than a few now think the latter.

JACOB NEUSNER
Providence, Rhode Island

CAUGHT ZIPPER

To the editors:
Writing of Rupert Brooke in the years before World War I ("Budding Brooke," August 31), Michael Levenson asks, "How could he ever have written a line if he was so busy fumbling with his zipper?" He might have been busier than Levenson thinks, because the old-time buttoned flies did require some dexterity. Zippers had not yet been invented.

HOWARD M. STILLER
Sarasota, Florida

THE LOOKS OF THINGS

To the editors:
Colleagues have pointed out to me M.P.'s Cambridge Diarist ("Return to Realism," August 10 & 17) in which he accuses one "Theda Skockpol" of—long

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
OCTOBER 5, 1987

THE CASE AGAINST BORK

The controversy over President Reagan's nomination of Robert Bork for the Supreme Court is a rebuke to those—including this journal—who are wont to complain that the American political dialogue is cheesy and trivial. In the bicentennial year of the Constitution, we are enjoying an astringent debate over first principles: the allocation of power between branches of government, the meaning of the Bill of Rights, the tension between majority rule and individual freedom.

Robert Bork is a victim of this development. Few any longer maintain that such philosophical questions are irrelevant to his confirmation by the Senate—that he should be judged on "competence" alone, a test he would pass with ease. Bork is a victim, as well, of his own intellectual exertions: a lifetime of earnest and honest reflection on basic questions, expressed with admirable provocative swash. As a result, he is being judged by standards that did not apply to Sandra Day O'Connor or Antonin Scalia.

But the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment (as Judge Bork would surely agree) doesn't guarantee equal treatment of Supreme Court nominees. "More than any nominee in recent decades," writes Stuart Taylor in the *New York Times*, "Judge Bork is the representative and leader of a school of thought. He has worked out an overarching legal and constitutional philosophy that he says should govern all judicial decision-making." Reagan nominated Bork because of this philosophy, and senators have the right and duty to decide whether they share this philosophy in voting on his confirmation.

In contrast to the demeaning White House campaign to portray its nominee as "open-minded" and "unpredictable," TNR wishes to pay Bork the compliment of taking his philosophy seriously. While we admire Robert Bork as a man and as a thinker, we do not share his judicial philosophy and do not wish to see him on the Supreme Court. This is true although we ourselves have had occasion to complain about the liberal fixation with "rights" and the over-reliance on courts to invent and enforce them. We agree with Bork's critique of some judicial excesses, especially the *Roe* v. *Wade* abortion decision. But we do not agree that intellectual consistency therefore requires us to renounce much of postwar constitutional jurisprudence.

The development of Robert Bork's thought can be traced in a series of now thoroughly pawed writings, beginning with a 1963 article in these very pages. In that TNR essay (later recanted), Bork denounced the public accommodations provision of the incipient Civil Rights Act—outlawing racial discrimination by commercial establishments—as "legislation by which the morals of the majority are self-righteously imposed upon a minority." The notion that "a majority may impose upon a minority its scale of preferences," Bork wrote, is "a principle of unsurpassed ugliness."

Unsurpassed ugliness, perhaps, but not unconstitutional. In 1971, in the *Indiana Law Review*, Bork used the moral relativist's credo as the foundation for his philosophy of judicial restraint. "Every clash between a minority claiming freedom and a majority claiming power to regulate involves a choice between the gratifications of the two groups." Since "[t]here is no principled way to decide that one man's gratifications are more deserving of respect than another's," the majority's wishes must prevail unless "constitutional materials . . . clearly specify" otherwise. A married couple's wish to use contraception has no greater claim against the majority will than a utility company's wish to pollute the atmosphere. Constitutionally, "[t]he cases are identical."

By this basic reasoning, Bork has written in 1971 and since that the Supreme Court was wrong to prevent states from enforcing racial restrictions in real estate deeds; wrong to invalidate the poll tax; wrong to require "one-man-one-vote" for state legislatures; wrong to apply the 14th Amendment to discrimination against women or any other non-racial group; wrong to ban sterilization of crimi-

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nals and prayers in schools; wrong to find any right of privacy in the Constitution; and so on.

The 1971 article also focused on freedom of speech. Constitutional rights, Bork argued, are of two sorts: those explicitly mentioned in the text and those that "derive . . . from governmental processes" in the Constitution. Free speech, he said, is of the second sort. "The Framers seem to have had no coherent theory of free speech," and judges therefore "are forced to construct our own theory." Bork's theory was that "governmental processes" only require protection of political speech. Speech on non-political subjects and speech advocating violation of the law, he argued, can be censored or punished without constitutional constraint.

Despite its professed view that one moral value is as good as another—the premise of its narrow reading of the Constitution—Bork's 1971 article took special aim at pornography, noting that it could be seen as "a problem of pollution of the moral and aesthetic atmosphere precisely analogous to smoke pollution." By 1978, in a speech on the First Amendment at the University of Michigan, Bork had decided that "the consequences of such 'private' indulgence may have public consequences far more unpleasant than industrial pollution." He criticized "the shopworn slogan that the individual should be free to do as he sees fit so long as he does no harm to others" because advocates of this formula recognize only "physical or material injury" and not moral harm to the community. In 1984, in a Washington speech on "Tradition and Morality in Constitutional Law," Bork argued that the "community is entitled to suppress . . . moral harms" in general. He condemned the "privatization of morality which requires the law of the community to practice moral relativism."

Two other Bork writings of recent years amplified and/

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart
1.	BORK BARBECUE	*	6
2.	POPE ON A ROPE	3	2
3.	LA GUERRE EST FINIE	*	10
4.	NUNN OF THE ABOVE	5	18
5.	LOOK BACK IN ANGST	7	4
6.	PUFF THE MAGIC DRAG	*	8
7.	VOODOO ECONOMICS	—	1
8.	YOU COULD LOOK IT UP	—	1
9.	THE CHILDREN'S HOUR	*	6
10.	MUDD IN YOUR EYE	*	2

Bork. Bork's a moderate, the administration now says, while the ubiquitous Senator Hatch insists that Bork's (mainstream) actions speak louder than his (conservative) words. What does this mean? That, in a p.r. battle, conservative ideas on domestic issues must be disguised. U.S. social thought has long been liberal, something that may have been obscured by Reagan's personal popularity.

Papal visit. Never mind the sex lives of white Catholics. John Paul II's U.S. tour revealed Church-related controversies that had gone ignored: the changing ethnic character of the U.S. Church, the Church's role in anti-Semitism, alleged Church racism, and even alleged Church genocide against Indians. The pope's own statements on the sanctuary movement only politicized the journey further.

Contras. To keep *contra* aid alive, Daniel Ortega must now actually invade Harlingen, Texas. The president so misplayed his peace plan smoke screen that even movement conservatives have joked publicly about his intelligence. Moderate pro-*contra* support has evaporated, and the mainstream press is characterizing remaining support as rear-guard zealotry.

1988. With Nunn out, the South's Super Tuesday becomes a potential Democratic disaster. There's no strong Southern white candidate, and though the party can't afford a strong Jackson candidacy, it can't afford to stop him. Meanwhile, on the local level, ad pros are predicting another season of negative political spots. Why? A lack of defining issues.

Arms control. Shevardnadze's White House visit has played behind numerous other stories. Yet this is, supposedly, a major act in Reagan's big chance at History. The truth is, Reagan's arms control gambit, whether or not it succeeds, faces significant hurdles of opinion. First, his foreign policy competence has been questionable, at least. Second, when you think, Historically, of Nixon, do you think of the China opening, or of something else?

Smoking. Where there's no smoke, there's fire anyway. Announcement of an almost smokeless cigarette—sharply attacked by anti-smoking forces already—coincides with new figures indicating there are fewer U.S. smokers than ever. By the way, except for expensive stogies, cigar smoking is rapidly disappearing.

Haiti. Just as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. tried to scold the U.S. into helping post-Duvalier Haiti, the *Economist* has identified it as the first certifiably hopeless economy. In fact there are many hopeless economies. What's interesting here is the abandonment of traditional Western optimism concerning development, and presumably the expensive benevolence that has gone with it.

Language. Anglophones can feel smug at the recent Francophone conclave in Quebec; after all, the French are trying to stem an irresistible English tide. But what are *we* doing to English? Random House's latest unabridged edition contains *tens of thousands* of new entries. English's malleability is a sign of its vitality, but American lexicographers may be deserting their role of providing a conservative language force.

Post-network TV. Kidvid producers and toy makers have found a way around the networks when their pilots are turned down: repackage the same concept for home video. Most kidvid has long been a charade aimed at ancillary toy sales. Releasing the heavily promoted "shows" via cassette further encourages the developing two-tier TV audience, creating probable upscale-only fads.

Dan Rather. Can people meters tell CBS if Dan Rather is feeling OK? In recent weeks Rather's changed his "hot" style to a valiumized approach, changed it back, suggested that Charles Glass was a phony, and left the network feedless. Given Rather's enormous visibility, and the degree to which CBS's prestige is in his hands, this is, uh, remarkable behavior. Courage indeed.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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or modified his views on strict constructionism and judicial restraint. In 1984, as a circuit judge, he concurred in the First Amendment dismissal of a libel action against the columnists Evans and Novak. Even though there's no evidence that the Framers intended to restrict libel suits, he argued, a broader interpretation of their design is needed: "There would be little need for judges . . . if the boundaries of every constitutional provision were self-evident. They are not. . . . It is the task of the judge in this generation to discern how the Framers' values, defined in the context of the world they knew, apply to the world we know." In a 1985 pamphlet published by the conservative Center for the Study of the Judiciary, Bork contended that there is a principled middle ground between blind literalism—which would doom the Constitution to irrelevance as times change—and irresponsible free-lancing.

NO ONE, of course, admits to making up rights and blithely sticking them in the Constitution. Everyone in this debate claims to be honoring the intentions of its authors, if only their intention to be broadly interpreted. Is Bork's analysis so compelling that less stinting views must shudder and give way? We think not.

Bork's intellectual progress, surveyed above, contains more than one anomaly. For example, moral relativism led him to conclude that the principled derivation of broad individual rights from the language of the Constitution was a hopeless task. Since then, he has abandoned moral relativism with a vengeance. Yet he clings to the belief that the task is hopeless. Now that he has concluded that his own moral values can be more than just a series of random "gratifications," why won't he extend the same courtesy to the authors of the Bill of Rights?

Bork defends his narrow reading of the First Amendment's freedom of speech on the contradictory grounds that the purpose of free speech is to facilitate the political debate, and that society has the right to protect its own moral values. Moral values are a central political question. But Bork apparently believes that current moral values are beyond permissible challenge. Remember, we are not talking about public displays here. The "moral harm" society is entitled to "suppress"—a harm Bork analogizes to pollution—derives entirely from the effect on individuals of their own voluntary private decisions about what to read, see, and hear. The same logic could apply just as easily in many areas other than speech. This may not be "a principle of unsurpassed ugliness," as Bork once described the imposition of majority values on minorities, but it is rather unattractive—and ominous.

Bork's paradigm of legitimate judicial creativity is the 1967 Supreme Court decision defining electronic surveillance as a "search and seizure" under the Fourth Amendment. The Framers didn't know about electricity. If they had, they probably would have wanted the people to be protected from bugging as well as from physical police intrusion. Well, sure. That one's easy. But Bork himself realizes it's not always so easy. In his *Evans and Novak* opinion, he struggles to explain why it's OK for the Supreme Court to read restrictions on libel suits and segregated schools into the Constitution, even though both of these practices were known to the Framers and apparently not disapproved of. It seems that in these cases the Court was "applying an old principle according to a new understanding of a social situation." *A new understanding?* That gives the game away. Bork is entitled to claim that his new understanding is superior to others', of course. But he is not entitled to assert that he has discovered the philosopher's stone that converts original intent into modern meaning, and that broader "understandings" than his own are inherently unprincipled.

Bork's intellectual history is a series of wild ideological fusillades followed by midcourse corrections. This, in itself, is unobjectionable. Foolish consistency and all that. Still, there is something unnerving about Bork's pattern of conveniently mellowing his harsh principles. He has never satisfactorily explained how he, the strictest of strict constructionists, can defend *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, the great school desegregation decision. In his 1971 law review article, he babbled about "psychological equality" in a way that would do any liberal sociologist proud.

Bork now says he would define "political speech"—protected by the First Amendment—to include a broad "spectrum" of moral, scientific, and literary expression. He now says his exclusion of speech advocating illegality might not apply to advocacy of civil disobedience such as the civil rights sit-ins. In recent years he has been complicating his views on original intent, and has argued for expanded First Amendment protection of the press. His views on when to overrule precedents have noticeably softened in just the past few weeks. According to Michael Kramer in *U.S. News and World Report*, Bork has even told senators in his pre-confirmation rounds that he is willing to reconsider whether there is a constitutional right to abortion, "that just because he hasn't found it doesn't mean it's not there"—as if constitutional law were an Easter egg hunt and there might be some obscure provision he's overlooked in his years of scholarly searching. Is this "open-mindedness" reassuring? Or is it all a bit too facile for someone hungry for a lifetime appointment that would put his views beyond the need for further calibration?

AFTER THE *Roe* decision in 1973, this journal commented (in an editorial written by Robert Bork's mentor, Alexander Bickel): "[T]here is no answer that moral philosophy, logic, reason, or other materials of law can give to this question [of abortion]. That is why the question is not for courts, but should have been left to the political process." *Roe* implausibly found in the Constitution a detailed regulatory scheme dividing pregnancy into trimesters, with illogical and hypocritical rules for when and how the state could interfere during each period. TNR has long maintained that *Roe* was actually a disaster for liberals. It cast a retrospective shadow of illegitimacy over all the important cases of the Warren era. It short-circuited a political process that was rapidly legalizing abortion anyway. It reinforced the liberal addiction to court-imposed

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rather than democratic solutions to social problems. Meanwhile, as liberals grew complacent, *Roe* politicized a generation of social-issue conservatives. The right-to-life movement became a major building block of the "New Right," now a powerful reactionary political force.

But if some liberals fail to see the difference between finding a ban on abortion in the Constitution and finding a ban on real estate racial covenants, Judge Bork suffers from the same astigmatism. He believes that—with the exception of *Brown*—virtually all the most prominent postwar Supreme Court cases expanding individual rights against the state were wrongly decided.

Bork's views on freedom of speech are the scariest and least supportable, in our view. Although a "strict construction" of the First Amendment ("Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech. . . .") would seem to invite a fairly active judicial role in preventing state censorship, Bork characteristically sees that role as quite limited. And yet the limits he draws would give judges far more leeway to impose their own personal "gratifications" than the simple, broad right of free speech we enjoy today. Is this play politically relevant? Will this book undermine the reader's moral values? Has this protester crossed the line between acceptably challenging the law and unacceptably advocating its violation?

Bork's professed radical majoritarianism has some peculiar exceptions. He believes that congressional limits on presidential power such as the War Powers Act and the special prosecutor law—laws passed by a majority of both houses and signed by the president himself—are unconstitutional. He has criticized the line of Supreme Court cases, beginning with *Bakke*, that permit some forms of governmental affirmative action—every conservative's least favorite exercise of judicial restraint.

The most troubling shadow on the constitutional horizon is the rebirth of "economic due process": right-wing activist courts overturning zoning laws, safety regulations, and other governmental interference in the economy. Bork has been very cautious to dissociate his constitutional philosophy from his own staunch free market views. Bork's economic views are generally sound, but they're not in the Constitution any more than our own views on abortion. The *Wall Street Journal* published a revealing debate on September 14 between two conservatives, one complaining about Bork's failure to be an economic judicial activist and the other reassuring that he is "persuadable on economic rights." At the least, Bork needs to be grilled on this point during the Senate hearings, to make sure he's not "persuadable."

LIBERAL INTEREST GROUPS stand accused, justly, of spreading hysteria about Robert Bork. Even if he got his way and all the Supreme Court precedents he objects to were overturned, we would not return immediately to a land of back-alley abortions, forbidden contraceptives, and racially restricted neighborhoods, because the majority view on these issues has changed and the laws the Court overturned would not be put back on the books. But the telling point is that laws banning contraceptives and enforcing racial deeds, now so unthinkable, existed and were enforced only 20 or 30 years ago. Who's to say for sure they won't return? More fundamentally, who knows what manifestations of the majority will today will seem similarly unthinkable 20 or 30 years from now?

The Bill of Rights and the institution of judicial review are frankly anti-majoritarian. If we did not want to have unelected judges overruling democratically enacted laws, we would not need a Constitution. It's an odd arrangement. Yet every time the Senate votes on a Supreme Court nominee, the majority through its elected representatives is repeating the remarkable act of democratic self-abnegation that created the Constitution in the first place. Why? Partly because every member of the majority knows he or she is also a potential minority. The power we therefore give to judges is easy to abuse. Judges need enormous intellectual integrity. But they also need vision. By the definition of their constitutional role, they must see things the majority doesn't see. In 1971 Robert Bork saw the wisdom of *Brown* v. *Board of Education*. By then, so did most people. Would he have seen it in 1954?

For decades Ronald Reagan has been inveighing against the Supreme Court and demanding a sea change in constitutional law. Now, preposterously, the administration insists that its nominee would actually have very little impact. But the tedious statistical debate about how often Bork's lower-court opinions have or have not been reversed by the Supreme Court is beside the point. So is the fact that this or that distinguished jurist may have shared Bork's disagreement with this or that Supreme Court ruling. The president and his present nominee could not be clearer about the kind of Supreme Court they want. It is up to the Senate—which, unlike the president, was elected by majorities in *all 50* states—to decide whether it wants the same thing.

NOTEBOOK

□ NOT BRIGHT: Senator Joe Biden plagiarized a speech from British Labor Party leader Neil Kinnock in Iowa on August 23. "I started thinking as I was coming over here, why is it that Joe Biden is the first in his family ever to go to a university? Why is it that my wife [ditto]?" Kinnock had posed the same question in a widely praised TV commercial during last spring's British election. Were Kinnock's ancestors "thick"? Were Biden's "not bright"? Nonsense. Kinnock's "could sing and play and recite and write poetry" and "could work eight hours underground and then come up and play football." Biden's "read poetry and wrote poetry and taught me how to sing verse" and—even more impressive—"worked in the coal mines of northeast Pennsylvania and would come up after *twelve* hours and play football for four hours." And so on. The differences between the two speeches are as interesting as the similarities, illustrating—compare "thick"

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with "not bright"—the lower standard of what passes for eloquence in American politics. Biden's handlers claim he just forgot to credit Kinnock and went "on automatic pilot," though this doesn't quite explain "I started thinking as I was coming over here" or the fact that Biden has no coal-mining ancestors. The "automatic pilot" defense is, in a way, more disturbing than the charge it rebuts. We've already got an "eloquent" president who weaves rhetorical spells in blithe disregard of the facts.

□ SPEAKING OF PLAGIARISM: Three Supreme Court justices, Harry Blackmun, John Paul Stevens, and William J. Brennan, have agreed to officiate at a "moot court" debate over whether Shakespeare actually wrote the plays published under his name. This is dangerous territory for their honors. Let's hope some judicial clerks don't get the idea of staging a moot court debate over the actual authorship of Supreme Court opinions.

□ I CAN'T RECALL: President Reagan told *USA Today* that Vice President Bush has been "actively engaged" in making administration policy, but when asked to "give us an example or two," Reagan said, "I can't answer in that context." This is embarrassingly reminiscent of President Eisenhower's remark at a press conference in 1960 when asked about important decisions Vice President Nixon had been involved in: "If you give me a week, I might think of one. I don't remember." In Reagan's case, of course, it could actually be true that Bush has been deeply involved in everything but Reagan just can't remember anything about it.

□ A TALE OF TWO CITIES:

Crime down in Denver

—*Denver Post*, August 29

Number of serious crimes up this month in Denver

—*Rocky Mountain News*, same day

(thanks to David Miller, Denver, Colorado)

Street Protests Banned in Moscow

—*San Francisco Chronicle*, September 2

Moscow council OKs street demonstrations

—*Sacramento Bee*, same day

(thanks to Lawrence D. Fanning, Davis, California)

□ THE INSCRUTABLE AYATOLLAH:

Iran to co-operate with Saudi Arabia on oil prices

—*Financial Times*, September 11

Iran Angry At Saudis On Output

—*New York Times*, same day

POSTCARD SOUTHEAST ASIA

BACK TO ETHNICS

IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, August is not the dog-day month it is in the United States and in Europe. Of course it's hot—that's barely worth mentioning—but it isn't quiet and closed-up. In fact, visiting Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia in August means crashing one national celebration after another. All three capital cities were crowded with posters, murals, and banners, bold-lettered declarations of unity and proud nationhood. The commotion was a vigorous exercise in self-affirmation. But from the sidelines, the patriotic partying sometimes looked a little insecure. These are countries that can't help raising the question, Is this really a nation at all?

Thailand makes the others look especially precarious. The quaintest proof of Siam's resilient unity through 50 years of coup-ridden politics is the ubiquitous devotion to the country's constitutional monarchs. In anticipation of Queen Sirikit's birthday, August 12, Bangkok was plastered with her portrait. The socialist-realist style posters were not exactly flattering, but Thais quickly correct this misimpression: their queen is truly beautiful. And many of them have reason to know. They've seen her up close, because she and King Bhumibol travel around the country constantly, greeted by crowds who really do bow and scrape. Thus it wasn't a great surprise to discover that the excitement extended well beyond the capital, even if the birthday celebrations in Bangkok were bound to be unmatchable: the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, whose gilded and porcelain-encrusted spires and orange roofs flash fantastically during the day, were going to be lit up at night.

Up north in bucolic Chiang Mai, where the inhabitants talk about Bangkok as if it were their least favorite foreign country, the posters were everywhere too (and even the college students seemed to be royalists: one girl told us that she and her friends stayed up late toasting the queen's long life). Yet the ultimate proof of the monarchs' unifying popularity lay even farther north, at the frayed edges of the country near the border of Burma, in a hill village inhabited by the Yao tribe, whose language few outsiders could understand until recently. Stepping into the head tribesman's thatched hut, I saw in the smoky gloom that the bamboo walls were hung with magazine photos of King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit, and their children and grandchildren.

It's not nearly so easy to rouse a spirit of unity in Singapore, an unlikely nation of three languages (English, Malay, and Chinese—"Start with Mandarin, not dialect!" exhorts a sign) and more races and religions. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's exhausting National Day Rally speech on August 16, and the stilted hortatory pennants everywhere, confirmed the obvious: there's nothing spontaneous about patriotism here. Unity seems to be based on calculation,

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not emotion. Certainly dour didacticism was the style of Lee's address; the prime minister went on for two hours and 40 minutes, analyzing the challenge of balancing cooperation and competition, the necessity of separating religion and politics, the importance of multiracial representation in Parliament, and so forth. The sloganeering banners were more succinct, but hardly catchy either: "A vibrant society with citizens' development to the fullest," "A nation for all. Together . . . Excellence for Singapore," etc.

In true Singapore style, the private sector also joined in. F&N, the big soft drink firm, dreamed up its version of Coca-Cola's "Hands Across America" gimmick and staged it on Orchard Road, the main shopping street. A "Great Book" was installed in a pavilion, adorned with a large and gaudy rainbow. Posters all over the city-state urged Singaporeans to come sign their names to a pledge of loyalty: "We, the citizens of Singapore, pledge ourselves as one united people regardless of race, language, or religion, to build a democratic society, based on justice and equality so as to achieve happiness, prosperity, and progress for our nation." It was next to impossible to take the pulse of this bloodless nation. The Singaporeans I asked said the Great Book was silly, but the line to inscribe it was extremely long.

INDONESIA, which celebrated its National Day on August 17, makes Singapore look almost homogeneous. It is a country of 13,667 islands, roughly 6,000 of them inhabited. There are all kinds of Malays (Javanese, Sundanese, Bataks, Balinese, etc.), plus Micronesians, Melanesians, Chinese, Indians, and Arabs. There are many Muslims (90 percent), yet also Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, and animists. Indonesians speak about 300 languages and dialects. As the *Economist*'s special survey of the country, published on the eve of National Day, somewhat unsportingly put it, "If Indonesia did not exist, surely nobody would invent it."

Preparing to celebrate 42 years of independence with the usual abundance of banners, the government evidently decided it wasn't in the mood for the magazine's state of the union message. The article (which concluded that the country's implausible harmony is the product of repression, but that the same repression blocks real progress and prosperity) was censored—except for the cover headline. After carefully removing the offending pages and blacking out the special red sticker that announced the supplement, the authorities left the cover title alone: the survey was called "The Extended Family."

Maybe the censors decided it sounded like one more slogan for National Day. So why not let it decorate the newsstands? Certainly it's an epithet for the country that its two postwar leaders, "Bung Karno"—brother Sukarno, as Indonesians called their former leader—and "Pak Harto," father Suharto, would approve. The phrase may well suggest too much coziness and too little of the coercion that is required to keep a country like Indonesia functioning. But in fact the spirit of pragmatic coexistence that can keep a big clan from coming to blows does seem to prevail quite naturally among the vigorous cultures scattered over the many islands. The government understands that deep local allegiances can do a good deal to distract people from bigger destabilizing schemes. In Jakarta people may muse about Suharto's successor, but in Yogyakarta, which is the only sultanate left in the country, our guide was far more eager to discuss the question of the sultan's heir (a mystery, we were told, since the sultan has never designated a legal wife among his several consorts).

In Bali, which is every tourist's favorite example of enthralling localism, the prevailing concerns seemed both more provincial and more cosmic than National Day: temple feasts, children's anniversaries, marriages, first cremations, second cremations (when "blossom" effigies, symbolizing the soul, are burned). Yet even here, where patriotic posters were scarce and official celebrations are inevitably eclipsed by the constant acts of commemoration that constitute life on this Hindu island, the country's larger predicament wasn't far from mind. As we watched perhaps the most exotic rite, a tooth-filing ceremony, there seemed a certain civic symbolism in it.

When Balinese sons and daughters reach roughly 17, it is time for sacred dentistry. They are dressed in ceremonial robes and laid on a bed, surrounded by mounds of offerings. The tooth-filer then begins, grinding away at the edges of the upper six front teeth, evening them out. The patient turns pale, then sits up to assess the job in the mirror, then reclines again for more grinding. Our guide explained the ritual as signifying the repression of sensual appetites; the protruding canines link men to animals and demons. Others have associated it with propitiating "the rice soul," whatever that is. While I watched and cringed, it occurred to me that this ancient custom, peculiar to one branch of the Indonesian family, was a kind of symbol for the ordeal of the larger family: making the jagged parts into a smooth-edged whole. Naturally in Bali everybody—even the teenage victims as they consulted the mirror—kept smiling. That is also the surprising impression the country as a whole conveys: enforced harmony doesn't seem to hurt as much as you'd expect.

ANN HULBERT

Is anybody out there?

PAPA DO PREACH

San Antonio

It was just after the pope mentioned the sacrament of penance that the woman in front of me keeled over. I don't think there was a connection. Despite the 115-degree sun, most of the rest of us at the open-air San Antonio mass managed to stay upright through the sermon, guilt or no guilt. It was a remarkably catholic collection. Next to me,

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about a half mile from the papal altar, was a poor Hispanic family, a small boy wrapped around his father's waist, clinging to a dusty portable stereo. His pregnant mother stood silently above him, her eyes focused on the distant pontiff. Three yards down were some prosperous Anglos, four blond kids lying down on a quilt with Sony Walkmans, reading the comic strips in the *San Antonio Light* and squabbling over the sunshades. Near the fence, a Vietnamese-American family. Under the only small tree was a solitary, elderly man who had sat there impassively since I arrived at dawn.

The pope's visit to the Southwest was billed as the easiest part of his American trip: geared toward devout Hispanic Catholics obedient to the pope and unperturbed by the great media issues of divorce, women priests, homosexuality, contraception. But that's not what the crowd looked like. Once the Immigration and Naturalization Service made it known that Mexicans needed car insurance for the trip across the border, about 150,000 stayed away. The faithful who showed up were Texans of all backgrounds, whose instinct as the pope went by was to click cameras rather than make the sign of the cross. Only a handful of people knelt after communion. The pre-mass warm-up was gospel music. The liturgy was worthy of Andrew Lloyd Webber.

John Paul, moreover, didn't sound as if he were preaching to the converted. The press chose to focus on one bland sentence urging compassion "in the face of complex human, social, and political realities," and turned it into an endorsement of the sanctuary movement. But the pope's real message was far bleaker. He reminded his audience of their mortality and the "awful possibility of eternal punishment, eternal separation from God, in what the Christian tradition calls hell." He urged the re-establishment of the sacrament of penance (avoiding the Vatican II phrase "sacrament of reconciliation"), the necessity of priestly celibacy, devotion to the blessed sacrament outside of the mass, and the importance of old-style catechism. Later that evening, in the heart of the barrio, he talked of the moral chaos of modern America and called on parishes to embrace those who had fallen away from the faith. The words: "Come back!" echoed through the public address system.

Why this sternness with the most devout? It has something to do with the real state of the Southwest Hispanic Church in America, which is facing a crisis just as acute as its counterparts in the rest of the country. Supposedly the bulwark and the future of the faith in America, Hispanic Catholicism is threatened by apathy and squeezed by fundamentalist Protestants on one side and a radical clergy on the other.

THE NOON MASS at the Church of Saint Mary's in downtown San Antonio last Thursday gave an impression of unchanging fidelity. It was said at breakneck speed to about 40 elderly people (some of them veiled), followed by the novena, a series of traditional prayers reflecting on the life of the Virgin Mary. The sermon, from a robust Irish-American priest, discussed the mortal sin of missing mass on Sunday. The service ended with some wobbly, elderly singing of the "Ave Maria."

This may seem the archetype of Hispanic orthodoxy. It isn't. St. Mary's is the center of the sanctuary movement for illegal immigrants in San Antonio, and for the city's division of Dignity, the dissident Catholic gay group. The priest, Father Bill Davis, holds healing services every month, with improvised liturgy not officially sanctioned by the bishop. He is heavily involved in local politics, asks the congregation to join in the sermon, and is an open supporter of the Sandinistas. He talks of "the healing of social and historical sin," and instructs his congregation in "human rights and the present cultural biases and structural evils that harm a holistic lifestyle."

Despite the clichés, Father Bill is obviously a committed and holy man. After mass he invited me in for lunch, took calls dealing with new illegal immigrants, and welcomed two workmen—one of them a Vietnam veteran—whom he'd just helped find jobs. "Put your body where your faith is, or you haven't got any," he urged me. "Somehow you can't be a Christian and hear a human cry and not reply to it." Through his active parish work, and through the Church-dominated Communities Organized for Public Service, he helped to transform some of the squalor of the barrio by organizing the urban poor. His theology has the feel of being improvised as he goes along: "If Jesus walked these streets, would he care what your catechism was?"

IN THE POOR West Side one of the largest parishes is Sacred Heart Church, in the center of the barrio, with 1,500 families on its books. The few dozen elderly couples at the Friday evening mass were assembled for a parish reunion (all of them now live elsewhere). During the sermon the priest took his microphone into the nave and, Phil Donahue-style, asked each of us where we came from; a Hispanic couple, celebrating their wedding anniversary, didn't understand the question and reiterated their names. The sermon was about how nice it was to be together again. On the altar, a banner read in Spanish: "Look for the structural causes of poverty."

Father Emil Wesselsky, the priest, has a problem with the Hispanic community: "I have a struggle to keep them away from their pious personal religion. We're still hung up, you see, on things like excessive devotion to the sacrament . . . we should look more to the social justice issues. If you leave them out, you've just destroyed Christianity." I asked him about Christ's distinction between God and Caesar: "Sure, but Caesar has got to be held responsible to the people, and we will hold his feet to the fire until he is." His anti-Protestantism is a curious variety: "Anything Protestants have today is really old Catholic. . . . All I'm trying to do is jump back to the old Catholicism." He recognized the problem of the drift of Hispanic Catholics, even in the barrio, to the fundamentalists.

It doesn't seem that way to wander around the neighborhood. The poverty of the houses is only matched by the

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garden shrines to Our Lady of Guadelupe and Our Lady of San Juan, commemorating appearances of the Virgin Mary. On the walls of the public housing slums there are vast murals, painted by children, depicting the lives of saints, Mexican heroes, and the Crucifixion. On Saturday afternoon, in a San Fernando graveyard, there was a dazzling display of traditional Mexican-American Catholicism. At the funeral of Mr. Gomez, a mariachi band played Mexican tunes in loud brass in the noon sun, drowned out only by the wailing of children and women. All around them, graves were decorated traditionally: the dead's favorite beer left on the tombstones for the adults, toys left on children's graves, pictures of couples inlaid into the plaques, even if only one of them has died.

Still, a mere four blocks away, the Asambleas de Dios Pentecostal church is booming. A 24-year-old Hispanic, Joe Cordero, tells his story. He was a stillborn child, but survived, something his mother had asked of Our Lady of Guadelupe. When he was ten, she took him to the shrine at Guadelupe in thanks: "I told my mom, that thing's not alive, that thing's dead. She slapped me across the face. Ever since then, I never believed in the saints. . . . I think Jesus Christ can do it now." His faith was his own: "It has to be a personal deal." Part of his complaint against Catholicism is its liberalism: "You can have a 12 o'clock mass and at 8 o'clock that night, you're selling beer and wine to the constituents." He might also have been put off by a church whose clergy has, until very recently, been overwhelmingly non-Hispanic. On the gay issue, he cited Sodom and Gomorrah.

"You go to a Baptist church, and you feel more formal, more spiritual" is how 30-year-old ex-Catholic Deborah Akia put it. "I went back to church once, and the sign of the cross was gone—that's the heart of religion. When I was small, even though it was Latin, and I didn't understand a word of it, you could feel the presence. Now you look down the aisle, and they're in T-shirts and sneakers. . . . It's a shame." She's now an Assembly of God Pentecostalist.

IN RESPONSE to the growing number of fundamentalist conversions, the Catholics, as Father Emil showed, have embraced the Pentecostal approach. It has not been an easy process. The Cathedral of San Fernando captures the awkward balance many churches now strike between new-style Bible-Belt fervor and old-style Hispanic devotion. It has dramatizations of the gospels and healing services, but retains benediction (adoration of the blessed sacrament) and regular confession. Father Virgil Elizondo explains: "It's not ignorance that holds onto these practices. . . . They're not backward in any way." As we walked past the church a young professional woman asked him to bless her scapular, a small religious medallion around her neck.

San Fernando has embraced, willy-nilly, the diversity that the Second Vatican Council unleashed on the Church. But its Hispanic emphasis remains. The approach to Church discipline avoids the Northeastern preoccupation with what one priest called the "pelvic issues." Father Virgil, asked whether homosexuality is a sin, replied, "Sure it is, but so is avarice." His approach is to deal concretely, rather than intellectually, with the problems of the faithful: case by case, soul by soul. The result is that the Hispanic Church may seem quieter, less troubled, less vocal than its Northern and Eastern counterparts, but that does not mean that the same problems do not exist. "We don't need special services for gays in the Church: they're already in the Church, have always been in the Church" is how Father Virgil put it. He prefers to deal with the problems on the ground rather than in the newspapers. In short, he keeps them in the family. The moral law stays, the pope is cheered; but when he's gone, the quiet haggling begins.

THERE'S ANOTHER REASON for the comparative silence in the pelvic debate. The big problems in San Antonio are electricity bills, immigration forms, and joblessness. The Church in the Southwest, dealing with illegal immigrants, poverty, illness, and refugees from the war in Central America, is in some ways comparable to the Church in India, Poland, and Africa in its delicate balance between spirituality and social action. In the San Fernando rectory, Father Roberto Paderes, a young, bearded Guatemalan refugee, lives in the same room as Geraldo, an illegal immigrant from Costa Rica. Geraldo is 24 years old and, in an accident in illegal work, was nearly electrocuted on a power line. He lost one leg and two fingers on both hands, as well as suffering severe burns. Seven months later in the rectory he seemed fully at home. This is just one testimony to the inspiring social work the Church is doing in the Southwest. But there's a connection here with the decline of the Church's popularity. The tendency to turn the Church into an essentially political and social, rather than spiritual, organization is greater than ever. This leaves religion to the fundamentalists, who are only too eager to welcome a flock seeking more spiritual guidance.

Sensing this, the pope's message to seminarians in San Fernando Cathedral was a call simply for more religion. In the wake of Vatican II, growing secularization, doctrinal confusion, and liturgical decay, John Paul II reaffirmed the necessity for a disciplined spirituality, of a kind Hispanic Catholicism used to be renowned for. He even went so far as to affirm the virtues of unworldliness: "What you do is important, but what you are is even more important: more important for the world, more important for the Church, more important for Christ." The message of John Paul throughout the American trip was daringly simple: a liberal social and economic activism needs a conservative doctrinal and spiritual base. It's a radical but effortlessly Catholic philosophy, and the importance of the Southwest is that it's the crucible for the experiment. John Paul understands this. He also understands that if it doesn't work here, it won't work anywhere. He could soon have an American Church that is Catholic in nothing more tangible than its name.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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The INF fallout.

CRUISIN' FOR A BRUISIN'

SINCE 1981 the United States and the Soviet Union have been trying to work out disarmament à deux—in outer space, in the strategic arena down below, and in the European theater, where U.S. cruise missiles and Pershing IIs are arrayed against the notorious SS-20s and a whole family of lesser SS designations. Unable to agree on the two big-ticket items—strategic offense and defense—the superpowers are about to strike a "historic" deal (the "double-zero") on the Euromissiles. If it comes to pass, two entire categories of nuclear weapons will disappear: those in the 1,000- to 5,000-kilometer range and those in the 500- to 1,000-kilometer range.

The Soviets recently dragged a half-forgotten hybrid system to center stage—the 700-kilometer "Pershing Ia," owned by the West Germans but with warheads in American custody. The Soviets began to portray those 72 outworn missiles as the last "insurmountable" obstacle in the talks. It was a nice way to test the strength of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's center-right coalition and the resilience of Bonn's American connection—and the Soviets won. Facing "gentle persuasion" from Washington, indifference from Paris and London, and a loudly anti-nuclear Socialist opposition, Kohl caved in. The joint U.S.-German Pershing venture, in place for a quarter century, will go once the two superpowers finish dismantling their Euro-arsenals.

Though an INF agreement will eliminate only about three percent of the world's stockpile, the appellation "historic" is perhaps no exaggeration. It would be the first time two great powers actually agreed to *scrap* weapons, and not just to limit their growth (as in SALT) or to demilitarize a particular piece of real estate. It would also be the first time that the swords-into-plowshares business would be effected by voluntary and bilateral contract. Historically there has been plenty of enforced disarmament, imposed by the victors on the losers, and of unilateral arms cuts whereby nations decide on force reductions for their own reasons.

Nevertheless, even if the entire Soviet Euro-force goes to the scrap heap, the United States will gain no security. None of these 600-odd missiles is capable of hitting the American homeland. The Russians, on the other hand, would get rid of 424 U.S. Pershing II and cruise missiles (the planned total was 572), all of which can reach into the Soviet Union. True, the Soviets lose some nuclear options, but help is already on the way. They are about to deploy the mobile, variable-range SS-24 with ten warheads apiece. Officially classified as "intercontinental," these missiles fall outside the scope of an INF treaty. Yet with a range between 3,000 and 9,000 kilometers, they can be launched as easily against Bonn as against Boston.

The Western Europeans are not amused by what they see unfolding in the aftermath of Reykjavik. What may be a sideshow for the two great powers happens to be the main event for those, especially the nuclear have-nots, who must share the continent with a very big neighbor to the east who will always command a surfeit of nuclear weapons. Nor are the Europeans assured by the "Big Twoism" that brought us double-zero. Right after Reykjavik, French prime minister Jacques Chirac invoked the oldest of Western Europe's traumas: once more, "decisions vital to the security of Europe could be taken without Europe really having any say in the matter."

The Europeans brought this upon themselves. In 1981 West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt pressured President Reagan to offer the original "zero option"—removal of all intermediate nuclear forces from Europe—in order to get badly needed relief from his anti-nuclear tormentors in the streets and in his own Socialist party. Given the wave of anti-nuclear (and in part anti-American) pacifism then sweeping Western Europe, the "zero option" looked like a wonderful ploy: Would any Russian leader be so stupid as to let go of his great Euro-strategic advantage?

Six years later, with American INFs in place in Europe, Gorbachev accepted the 1981 offer. Hoping to stop the momentum, the Western Europeans, and the West Germans above all, retorted: "What about your shorter-range missiles, where you have an intolerable monopoly?" Again, Gorbachev's "stupidity" triumphed. He told them: "You can have those, too." It was an offer nobody now dares refuse.

On the face of it, Gorbachev's offer looks great: what is known in the trade as "asymmetric reduction." He is willing to yield 1,300 warheads for a mere 424 deployed by NATO. Why not take the missiles and run? Answer: because if Gorbachev wants to give away so much for so little, then his idea of a loss and a gain must obviously be different from ours. Needless to say, Gorbachev knows what he's doing.

FIRST, in offering double-zero, he invited NATO to get rid of its most modern weapons, the Pershing II and cruise missiles, and to forgo deployment on the next level down. The alliance will thus have to fall back on its nuclear-equipped aircraft, most of which cannot make it beyond Poland and all of which run the risk of being destroyed by a pre-emptive strike before takeoff. If they do get off the ground, they may still not make it to their targets; Warsaw Pact territory is the most lethal air-defense environment in the world. By contrast, there is no effective defense yet developed against Pershing II and cruise missiles.

The second catch is conceptual. Nuclear weapons in Europe, especially those that could pierce the Soviet sanctuary, represented the core of Western Europe's defenses. They were installed to counter a natural Soviet advantage and a congenital Western European weakness:

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Russia's preponderance as a nearby superpower and the half-continent's inability (or unwillingness) to field the men and matériel for a conventional defense.

In other words, Gorbachev has proposed not to start with the *basic* imbalance, the geographical-conventional one, but with precisely those weapons deployed to *neutralize* that imbalance. And thus Gorbachev's new thinking turns out to be not so different from the old. "Denuclearization" has been the watchword of Soviet policy since the beginning of NATO. The Soviets fought the insertion of tactical nuclear weapons in the 1950s, and unleashed a massive campaign against NATO's "two-track decision" of 1979 that led to the deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles. Moscow's nuclear options do not depend on this or that Euromissile. Meanwhile, the drawdown of Western nuclear weapons will unshackle Russia's advantage in troops and tanks, aircraft and artillery.

The third catch is psychological. In the age of "parity" consecrated by the first SALT treaty of 1972, the Europeans have always sought safety in nuclear arrangements that obliterate the distinction between local and global war. Pershing II and cruise missiles standing in the path of a Soviet advance might just go off (whereas a Minuteman III stationed in Montana might not), destroying along with Kiev any dream of a war neatly confined between some Central European "firewalls."

Take out long-range INF, and the idea of a war that begins and ends in Central Europe is no longer as absurd as it once was. The shorter the ranges, the deader the Germans who are the prize and the pillar of Europe's postwar order. Which is why an unwritten law of NATO states that Germany must not be what geography has condemned it to be: the venue and victim of East-West war in Europe. Hence the United States has endlessly sought to reassure the Germans with dispositions that threaten to blur the distinction between regional and global war. Yet by leaving in place 4,600 nuclear weapons mainly destined to explode in Germany, double-zero deepens the most powerful "contradiction" within the alliance. In their classic nightmare the Germans play host and target for weapons that will devastate Germany only, and that nightmare presents diplomatic opportunities for the Russians that hardly need belaboring.

TO RESTORE equilibrium, the Germans will have to reduce the reasons the Soviets might have to threaten them. The name for this used to be "appeasement." Interestingly enough, Chancellor Kohl's rightish coalition partner, Franz Josef Strauss's Christian Social Union, has already run this theme up the flagpole. Once there are "zones of differential security," a just-published position paper warns darkly, the "Alliance will lose its meaning. Inevitably, this will engender a reorientation of German foreign policy." Thus the right joins the left on a common platform of neutralist nationalism.

President Reagan's "historic" agreement exposes the West Germans, the holders of the European balance, to a separate nuclear threat and all of Western Europe to the lengthening shadow of Soviet conventional might. From Gorbachev's point of view, not a bad political prize for the price of a few hundred expendable missiles.

JOSEF JOFFE

Josef Joffe is foreign editor of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in Munich and author of *The Limited Partnership: Europe, the United States, and the Burdens of Alliance* (Cambridge: Ballinger).

Time to cool it.

AIDS HYSTERIA

THE PEOPLE of Arcadia, Florida, want you to know that they are not ignorant. The reverend at the local Methodist church complains that "the media seem to want to paint us as illiterate and belligerent rednecks." True, they ostracized the Ray family because their three hemophiliac boys carry the AIDS virus. True, they tried to keep the boys out of school, until forced to relent by a court order, at which point the Ray house was destroyed in a suspicious fire and the Rays decided to leave town. But, explains Sue Ellen Smith, wife of the mayor, who took her child out of public school when he was assigned to a class with one of the Ray boys, "If you are intelligent and listen and read about [AIDS], you get scared."

You certainly do. It is not ignorance that ran the Rays out of Arcadia. Quite the contrary. The people there have been told a thousand times who gets AIDS and how they get it. They may even know that there is not one recorded case of a child contracting AIDS from a classmate. In fact, there is not one documented case of a child contracting AIDS from a sibling, and brothers and sisters are in far more intimate contact than schoolmates.

To which the parents reply that no one can guarantee that such a thing could never happen. True, but no one can guarantee that an earthquake will not swallow up the school tomorrow or that Mrs. Smith's boy will not get killed in a car accident on the way to his new private school—and neither possibility induces Mrs. Smith to keep her boy home. The Smith boy is as likely to die by earthquake as he is by sitting in homeroom with young Ray, and far more likely to die in an auto accident. But AIDS is on his mama's mind. Her selective irrationality in the face of improbability is not the product of ignorance, but of a media-fed national panic. AIDS is one case where the truth is not making people free. It is so packaged in hype and hysteria that it is simply making people afraid.

Doom sells. In a comfortable culture, the notion of apocalypse—any apocalypse will do—fascinates and enthralls. Kids go to horror movies to find this kind of thing. Adults go to newspapers. At the beginning of the decade there was

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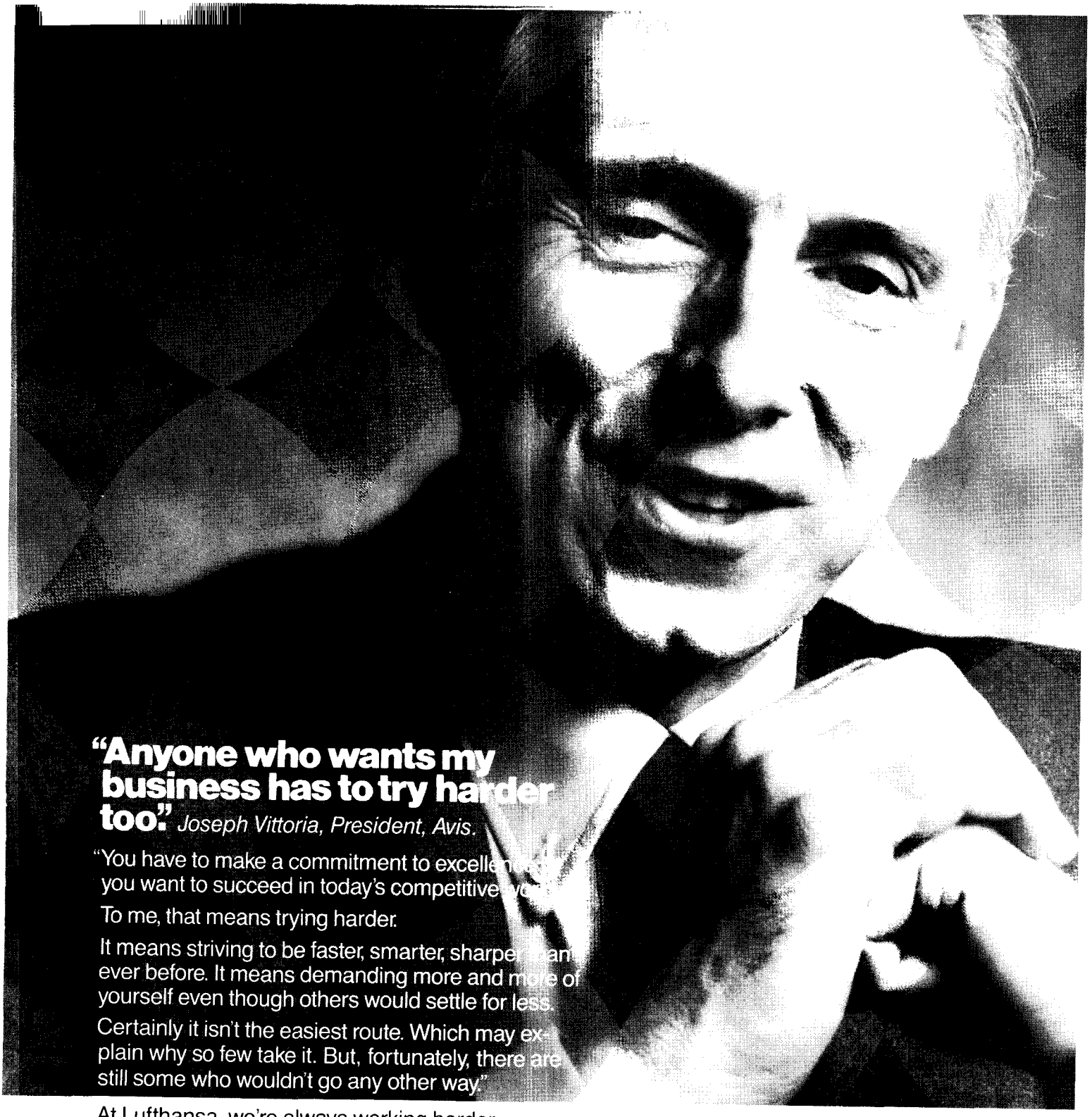
"Anyone who wants my business has to try harder too." Joseph Vittoria, President, Avis.
"You have to make a commitment to excelle
you want to succeed in today's competitive
To me, that means trying harder.
It means striving to be faster, smarter, sharper than
ever before. It means demanding more and more of
yourself even though others would settle for less.
Certainly it isn't the easiest route. Which may ex-
plain why so few take it. But, fortunately, there are
still some who wouldn't go any other way."

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nuclear apocalypse. Doctors' groups called it "the last epidemic." They were premature. When arms control talks resumed and the freeze movement went bust, the last epidemic was succeeded by two more. First, the drug epidemic, which enjoyed a certain vogue last year. (One newsmagazine compared it to "the plagues of medieval times.") Drugs have been consigned for now to the memory hole. They have been overtaken by today's terror, AIDS.

AIDS IS A serious problem. But the hyperbole surrounding it is embarrassing and, as the Rays of Arcadia have learned, dangerous. And though the hype is amplified by the media, it originates with political leaders who ought to know better. The secretary of Health and Human Services, for example, says that AIDS can make the Black Death "look very pale in comparison." And the chairman of the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, Representative Henry Waxman, calls AIDS the "most serious epidemic we've ever faced."

Nonsense. In three years the Black Death killed one out of every three Europeans. The flu epidemic of 1918-20 killed 22 million people, more than died on all sides in World War I, civilians included. In America alone, a half million died of the flu, 20 times more than have died of AIDS in this decade.

It is not just the numbers that are incomparable, but the state of scientific knowledge. No one knew what the Black Death was and no one knew how to treat the flu. In contrast, less than four years after the first reported case of AIDS, we knew the cause. We have identified and isolated the offending organism, one of the fastest such discoveries in history. "We now know more about this virus than perhaps any other," says Dr. Samuel Broder of the National Cancer Institute. It is six years after the discovery of the AIDS syndrome and human testing has begun on the first vaccine.

Most important, however, is that compared with most other infectious diseases, AIDS is very hard to spread. It is transmittable, but it is not contagious. You can get tuberculosis if the wrong person coughs on you. During the TB outbreaks of the last century, every time you rode the trolley or sat in a café you exposed yourself to danger. This is simply not true of AIDS. To contract AIDS you must undertake a complicated behavior (intravenous drug use, sexual activity) that requires conscious intent and your full cooperation. The number of exceptions to this rule is exceedingly small: babies born to mothers with AIDS, medical workers infected by the blood of AIDS patients (12 recorded U.S. cases), and medical patients infected by blood transfusions or blood products (an almost negligible source of new cases, now that the blood supply has been cleaned up).

Stephen Jay Gould warns that AIDS is "potentially, the greatest natural tragedy in human history." It "may run through the entire population, and may carry off a quarter or more of us." Gould is a respected paleontologist and media figure, but Harold Jaffe is chief AIDS epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. And Jaffe, who studies the figures every day, concludes that "we really have not seen much evidence for the spread of the virus into people who are not in risk groups." (Drug addicts and gay men continue to account for 90 percent of AIDS cases.) "For most people, the risk of AIDS is essentially zero." Just how hard it is to get AIDS is confirmed by a Berkeley study that looked at heterosexual transmission. It found that of women who had sex more than 100 times with an AIDS-infected man, only three in ten became infected. The director of the study concludes: "This is a hard disease to transmit."

You wouldn't guess it from the hype, which justifies itself with the claim that only information can prevent AIDS. Sure, but how much? For AIDS, the problem is not so much ignorance as it is will. How many gays are there who don't know about how AIDS is transmitted? How many addicts are there who don't know that they shouldn't use contaminated needles? In this respect, AIDS more resembles lung cancer than older epidemics such as tuberculosis or polio. We know exactly how to get AIDS and exactly how to prevent it. With the rarest exceptions, those who acquire the infection today (as opposed to those who contracted AIDS before the cause was known) are those who decide to take a risk, thinking that the roulette wheel won't stop at them.

Americans tend to believe that information is the key to social progress. Educate people about democracy or hygiene or better wheat-growing techniques and things will get better. For AIDS, however, the information flood is precisely the wrong remedy. Obsessive coverage does not create cures. It creates panic. Sue Ellen Smith is quite right. If you are intelligent and listen and read about AIDS, you get scared.

It is not more AIDS information that drug abusers need, but treatment for their addiction. It is not more condom ads scientists need, but money to pursue their studies. And it is not more stories about the terrors of AIDS—roll calls of the dead, first-person accounts of the agony of dying—that the public needs, but fewer. What harm can come from overreaction to a disease that kills 24,000 people? Ask the Rays, late of Arcadia, Florida.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

An alternative to the 'contra' war.

GIVE 'EM HELL

THE LOOMING SHADOW over the Nicaragua debate in this country is the question of direct U.S. military intervention. Both sides claim this is the last thing they want. Defenders of administration policy see the Reagan Doctrine of support for indigenous "freedom fighters" as an essential alternative to the involvement of U.S. troops. Critics—noting correctly that the *contras* cannot possibly

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achieve military victory—see the current phase as just a prelude to a direct military confrontation. The defenders reply that U.S. military involvement in Central America is more likely, not less, if we abandon the *contras*. That's plausible too.

YET IT'S POSSIBLE to imagine a new U.S. Central American policy, based on the direct and explicit threat of U.S. military force, that is more palatable to both the hawks and the doves in this debate—those who fear another Cuba, and those who fear another Vietnam. The policy involves handling the Sandinistas and other potential threats in Central America the way that great powers have always dealt with pesty, puny neighbors: by laying down the law unilaterally and enforcing our will through intimidation and direct uses of military force. If the intimidation is successful—as it easily could be—the actual use of force would be unnecessary.

The United States should announce that it is no longer concerned either with the domestic makeup of any of the Central American countries or with the outcome of any of the region's military conflicts. It should establish or maintain diplomatic relations with any political faction that meets the admittedly hazy and none-too-exacting criteria for sovereignty used by Washington for other Third World countries. U.S. military aid programs would be limited to small arms and other clearly defensive weapons.

More important, Washington would make clear its willingness to use naval and air power, if necessary, to prevent outside powers from sending heavier arms to Central America. Washington would vow to do anything necessary to keep any threatening foreign presences out of Central America, and to keep the Panama Canal open. With measured doses of air and sea power, the United States can enforce these edicts if necessary without bogging itself down fighting Central Americans on the ground. Such actions might include blockades against cargo ships from unfriendly powers, and air and naval bombardment to eliminate weapons smuggled in or to follow up protests against excessively large staffs in unfriendly embassies or aid missions.

A demonstrated determination to use force coupled with a demonstrated toleration of domestic radicalism should also dissuade any Central American forces from closing down the Panama Canal. And the United States would minimize friction with its allies by placing no restrictions on civilian trade with radical regimes in the region, thereby preventing the kinds of disputes that flared over the attempted isolation of Cuba in the 1960s.

This back-to-basics approach would satisfy America's needs in Central America, if not all of our wants. And it suffers none of the fatal flaws of the major alternatives.

The Arias peace plan points up the dangers to the United States of relying on any diplomatic solution in Central America. The plan not only lacks any verification of its enforcement provisions but completely ignores the issue of a Soviet bloc presence in the region. Like any conceivable regional peace treaty, it would prohibit Washington from responding to foreign Communist presences unless local states agreed. In fact, requiring such a consensus would be any treaty's raison d'être. Yet most local governments are so fragile politically that they would have every reason to close their eyes to mounting levels of Soviet bloc personnel and weapons. These countries—and other Latin regimes—couldn't even bring themselves to vote in the United Nations to condemn Cuban human rights violations. Moreover, how likely would Panama's General Noriega be to endorse an American retaliatory strike against Nicaragua given his row with Washington now? How could any Mexican politician do so in an election year? In any year?

Even if the will existed, legal constructs like treaties raise the prospect of lengthy deliberations to document and prove charges, protracted appeal processes, the filing of countercharges, and other complicated procedures that all conflict with the security need to respond to violations quickly, before they become dangerous.

THE STANDARD alternative to a treaty is the *contras*. Support for the *contras* has been relatively cheap—so far. And for the time being, their activities have clearly helped to prevent the Sandinistas from thinking much about any plans for spreading revolution. But the *contras* are a poor substitute for direct applications of American power. Their biggest shortcoming is their inability to help America achieve either of its two most important security goals. First, the *contras* have done nothing to keep unfriendly foreign forces out of Nicaragua. In fact, they've worsened the problem. The *contra* war has led Managua to seek help from wherever help is available, and to invite in Soviets, Cubans, East Germans, North Koreans, Palestinians, Libyans, Iranians (presumably not the moderates), and others. Even the *contras'* strongest supporters concede that achieving their most modest goals will take years.

The political picture is equally bleak. *Contra* leaders publicly acknowledge that they still have no coherent political program with which to attract popular support, and the factional disputes that burst into the open last spring indicate that a consensus platform is not imminent. Moreover, heavy-handed U.S. efforts to boost the Robelo-Cruz faction have angered many in the *contra* movement itself. Other Nicaraguans are that much more likely to conclude as a result that the *contras* are simply Yanqui puppets not worthy of active support.

Nor does the *contra* effort serve as much of a model for other Central American trouble spots. If an unfriendly Panamanian regime shuts down the canal, would creating a force of Panamanian freedom fighters do America any good? Only if Washington was prepared to wait years until the new freedom fighters felt ready to march into battle.

By frankly intimidating and pushing Nicaragua around with our own military power, the United States can exploit its most reliable strengths. The superpowers may be strategic nuclear equals, but the U.S. Navy still rules the waters off Central America. Consequently, Managua's only con-

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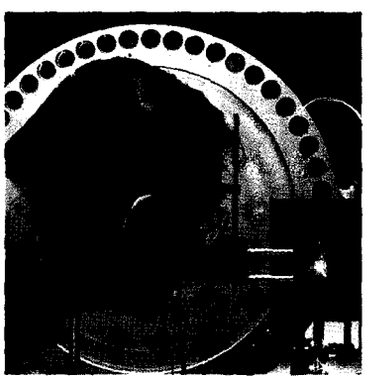
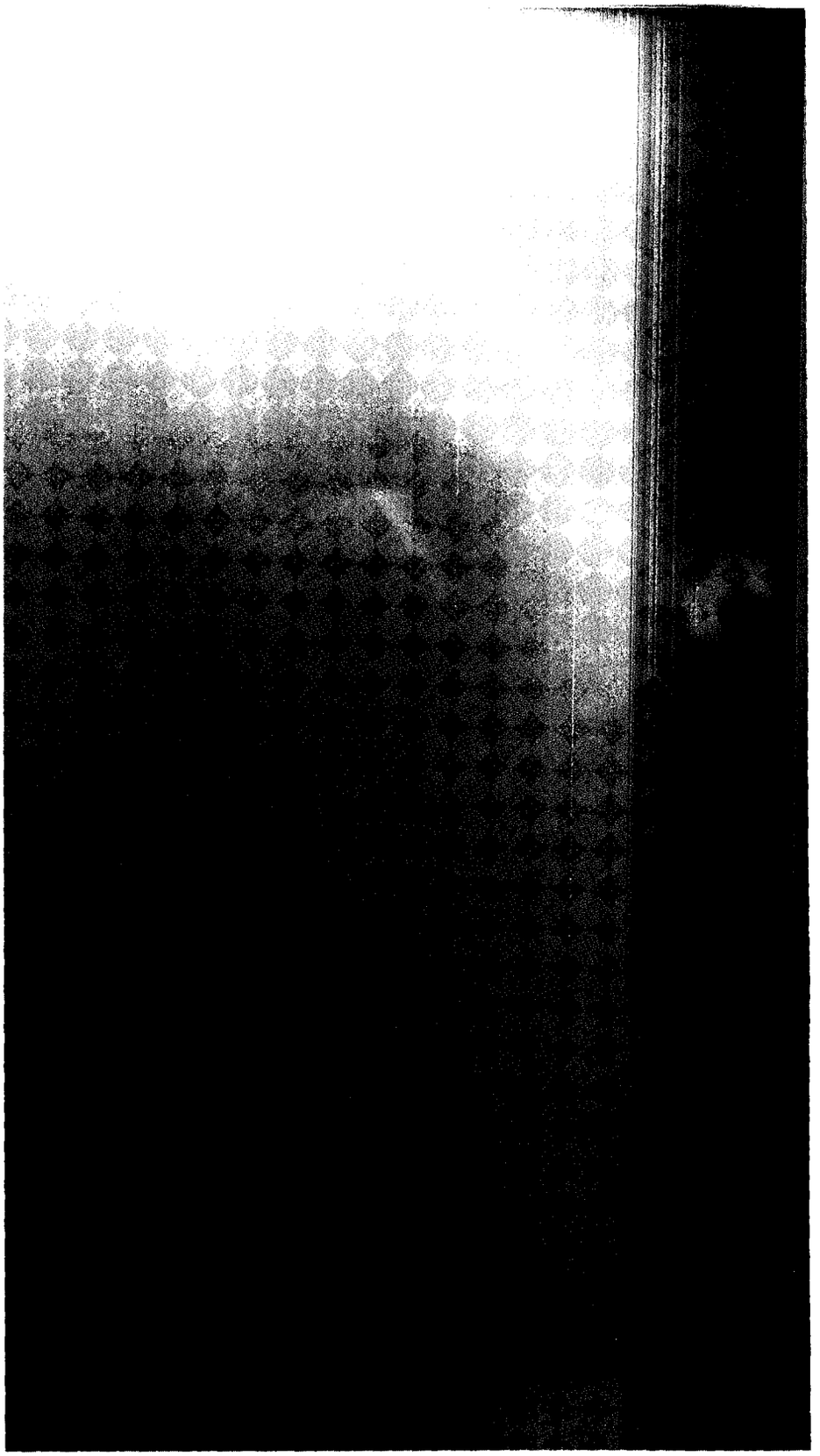


"My job is to plug spacecraft into the sun."



"Space travelers will require dependable electricity for some of the same reasons you do — warmth and light, for example. And scientific and communications equipment operations in space will require increasing amounts of electrical energy. We've created a new kind of solar cell that provides electrical energy 50 percent more efficiently than today's solar cells and that will last longer in the space radiation environment. The long-term potential for these advanced solar cells also could make life on earth more pleasant. Solar cell technology

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may one day fulfill the dream of environmentally sound, limitless, and low-cost energy for homes, stores, offices and factories."

— Dr. Walter E. Devaney
Research Scientist
Boeing Electronics Company

At Boeing, we're sharing knowledge and integrating systems throughout the company to create high-quality products and services. In aerospace, computer services, electronics and aviation. You can trust the people at Boeing to do it right.

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ceivable protector, the Soviet Union, has almost continuously abided by the 25-year-old agreement forced on it after the missile crisis to keep certain weapons out of Cuba. The Kremlin's 1970 effort to build a submarine facility was easily halted by the Nixon administration with prompt warnings. Further, Moscow has made no promises to ride to Nicaragua's rescue if America attacks. The Soviets watched helplessly as American forces overwhelmed Grenada. And Castro himself has warned Nicaragua not to provoke American anger needlessly.

And if the Soviets do mount a conventional challenge in the region, Washington has more than enough power to crush it. Of course, Moscow could always threaten nuclear escalation to save Nicaragua, but this would be an act of complete insanity. And if the Soviets are insane, then any productive negotiations will be impossible, and a nuclear showdown could occur whatever force-backed policies America uses in Central America.

Ground warfare against the Sandinistas would require years of dirty, bloody, hugely expensive counterinsurgency operations even after the liberation of Managua. But Nicaragua is defenseless against American air and sea power. If Ortega and Company have a healthy sense of self-preservation, Americans should be able to bring Nicaragua to heel without slogging through its jungles—especially if it is clear that good behavior will bring a postponement of the regime's rendezvous with the ash heap of history.

THE OBJECTIONS to the back-to-basics strategy sketched here are easy to imagine. Would sending American warplanes on mission after mission over Central America reawaken bitter regional memories of past Yanqui imperialism (memories not sleeping too soundly to begin with), destabilize shaky democracies and pro-Western governments in general, and compound Washington's security problems?

This argument lumps together all conceivable U.S. uses of force and assumes that Latin Americans will be equally angered by each. Yet what America's neighbors want most to prevent are the classic interventions of the early 20th century and the cold war years, when American troops, or American-aided forces plus the CIA, toppled governments and replaced them either with American military rule or with surrogate regimes like the Somoza dynasty. The *contra* war evidently strikes many Latin Americans as more of the same. By contrast, the back-to-basics policy entails no such American invasions, no lingering mechanisms of control over domestic societies—no interference in the domestic affairs of Central American countries whatever.

Latin American governments, especially in Central America and the Caribbean, claim to recognize and understand America's security interests in the region. The great-power policy will hold them to their word. Just as it was and remains unreasonable to expect Latin American countries to sit back and watch the United States trample all over their sovereignty, it is unreasonable to expect the United States to await a favorable consensus to develop among its politically fragile neighbors before acting to protect itself. The hemispheric bargain proposed here would permit a modicum of mutual respect but would also reflect power realities.

Other objections will be practical. What would constitute unacceptable behavior by Nicaraguan or other radicals? How would the U.S. government decide? Most important, couldn't this policy trigger an endless series of disputes over what is and what is not a Soviet base, whether the Cuban-built barracks in a reconnaissance photo house military advisers or male nurses, etc.?

The answer, of course, is Yes. A determined minority in Congress could explain away Sandinista offenses, block any American use of force, and defang the policy before it ever gets started. In order to preserve maximum flexibility, Washington should not make public an exhaustive list of do's and don'ts, but rather present some general guidelines covering armaments, embassy and aid-mission sizes, and other categories. Too many specifics would only envelop the retaliation issue in a blizzard of technicalities. Vagueness from Washington can keep Central Americans looking over their shoulders—and to the skies—and more likely to err on the side of caution.

AS FOR AVOIDING paralyzing debates about the guilt or innocence of Central American radicals, there is no choice: the verdict must be left up to the president. Two factors, however, should reassure suspicious doves and inhibit abuses of this authority. First, limiting American goals—including their own—is the best guarantee that administration opponents have of limiting the means America uses in the region. If the United States renounces the goals of overthrowing the Sandinistas and bringing democracy to this benighted part of the world, it would be pointless to engage in secret and illegal shenanigans that make deeper, dirtier involvement much likelier. And Congress would retain the investigative and legislative powers to rein in an administration determined to cheat.

Second, the American people have never shown any interest in wanton brutality. Any president appearing to order air strikes just for the fun of it, without genuine provocation, will pay politically. Conversely, there is no reason to think that the public will oppose actions to enforce a live-and-let-live attitude toward non-threatening sovereign states. No matter what some of the hawks think, just because Americans want to avoid another Vietnam doesn't mean that they've lost the will to defend themselves.

The United States faces many critical and complicated foreign policy challenges, but neither Nicaragua nor Central America as a whole is among them. Washington needs to end its obsession with what is at best a minor nuisance, use its strengths effectively, and return Central America to the obscurity it so richly deserves.

ALAN TONELSON

Alan Tonelson is writing a book for The Twentieth Century Fund on redefining U.S. foreign policy interests.

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Paul Simon, your fifteen minutes have arrived.

PEE-WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE

BY FRED BARNES

SENATOR PAUL SIMON of Illinois is America's next political phenomenon. Over the summer he did by far the most impressive image-building job of the seven Democratic presidential candidates. He marketed himself as the candidate of deep liberal convictions who doesn't worry about image and doesn't sell out. He was the best performer in two televised debates. His four-minute segment on the AFL-CIO's videotape of statements by presidential candidates stirred significant labor support. He jumped in the polls, moving almost neck-and-neck with frontrunners Richard Gephardt and Michael Dukakis in Iowa, where the first delegates will be picked on February 8. The only thing Simon missed out on was a burst of media hype. That will come.

By no means is Simon the odds-on favorite now for the Democratic nomination. But he has a shot, and this wasn't deemed even remotely possible when he announced his candidacy last May. Then he seemed like a nice guy in over his head, an old-fashioned liberal singularly lacking in zip and TV presence. And there were his looks. In Hunter Thompson's cruel description, "Simon is small and ugly and weird and he almost never smiles. He has lips like Mick Jagger and the ears of a young baboon." That overstates it, but Simon is no Gary Hart in sex appeal. He is 58 but, with two hearing aids and the mien of a retired CPA, appears older.

Simon has turned his appearance into an asset. He has skillfully exploited his looks to drive home two overarching points about himself: he is trustworthy and he is authentic (an authentic liberal Democrat, in this case). His looks—he wears drab blue suits, bow ties, and horn-rimmed glasses—are a metaphor, one he invokes relentlessly. In his announcement speech on May 22, Simon said he has been urged "to get rid of my bow tie and my horn-rimmed glasses, and most of all, to change my views." No way, he said. He won't be "a candidate slickly packaged like some new soft drink. I am not neo-anything. I am a Democrat." In the first debate in Houston on July 1, Simon twiddled his bow tie during his closing statement. "If you want a slick, packaged product, I'm not your candidate," he said. "If you want someone who levels with you and whom you can trust, I'm your candidate." In speech after speech, he mentions the bow tie and glasses.

This tactic is gimmicky, but it works. "Subconsciously Simon's looks help convince people that he is indeed trustworthy," says Todd Domke, a Republican political strategist. "Lincoln once responded to a charge that he was deceitful by saying, 'If I were two-faced, would I be wearing this one?' Simon says, in effect, 'If I were trying to con you, would I be wearing this stupid bow tie and these out-of-date glasses?' " Vic Fingerhut, a pollster and Simon adviser, says that "people figure a guy who looks like Simon must be telling the truth. The authenticity of him as a person and the idea that he's the real Democrat work together."

But the real reason the gimmick works is that it's reasonably truthful. Simon is a genuine square, and his politics—the traditional liberalism of procedural reform, polite class warfare, and big government—haven't changed since he first ran for office 33 years ago. He was active in the civil rights movement in the 1950s, a politically risky activity in southern Illinois. As a young state legislator he introduced a bill barring racial discrimination by morticians after a funeral parlor rejected a black corpse. Simon wrote to Martin Luther King Jr., whom he'd met, and told him of this. The kicker in his letter went something like this: if all men aren't created equal yet, at least they'll be cremated equal.

Nor has Simon gotten rich in office. Last year he listed a net worth of $138,891 for himself and his wife. He has made only one pact with the devil in his career, running for governor in 1972 as the anointed candidate of Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago. He lost in the primary, and learned his lesson.

If the Democratic presidential candidates are the seven dwarfs, he's Doc—bespectacled, kind, avuncular, reassuring, and extraordinarily likable. He doesn't socialize heavily in Washington, play tennis or golf, or hang around with movie stars, though he once persuaded the singer Paul Simon to appear at one of his fund-raisers. His hobby is writing books. Introducing Simon in Charles City, Iowa, in August, Representative David Nagle said that "he's written 11 books, which is one more than President Reagan . . . [pause] has read." One book is the definitive work on Lincoln's four terms in the Illinois legislature. Another tells how Protestant-Catholic marriages, like his own, can succeed. In 1986 he published a book of advice to teenagers in which he sounds like Norman Vincent Peale. "Hardly anyone who works hard complains about bad luck," he wrote. On his list of 11 ways to overcome loneliness, No. 5 is "walk through three stores" and No. 8 is "take a shower." His latest book, *Let's Put America Back to Work*, outlines his plan for giving every American a job.

In his standard stump speech, Simon says there are three questions voters should ask about a presidential candidate. Is the candidate electable? Has he (or she, should Representative Patricia Schroeder get in the race) the courage to stand up to public pressure? Is he right on the issues?

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Simon dwells on the courage question, and he makes a fetish out of his wrongheaded vote last year against tax reform. He tells how a Senate colleague warned him ominously that a no vote would kill his political career. In the Houston debate, he said that "840 organizations endorsed that bill—the AFL-CIO, the Chamber of Commerce, the Farm Bureau, the National Association of Manufacturers. I don't know of a single organization that was against it. I was one of three votes against that bill in the Senate, and that was one of the best votes I ever cast."

Given Simon's druthers, the top rate on individual income would have stayed at 70 percent, where it was before the Reagan tax bill of 1981, which he also voted against. His goal has been to eliminate loopholes without slashing tax rates, a feat that is not politically feasible. The genius of tax reform was compromise, lower rates in exchange for fewer loopholes. Simon says it made the tax code less progressive (actually, that's debatable) and failed to narrow the budget deficit. He also quibbles with the reduction from 25 percent to 20 percent in the business write-off for research. "Anybody who believes we can have a better and finer America by cutting back on research, you have a great imagination," he says. With his strong views, you might suspect that Simon favors a fast reversal of tax reform. Wrong. He may be courageous, but he's not dumb. "The horse is out of the barn," he told me. "I'm not promising anything on a massive restructuring of the tax code."

Simon has a simple strategy for winning the presidency, and criticism of the drop in the top tax rate for the wealthy fits perfectly. He concentrates on bread-and-butter Democratic issues that appeal to the lower middle class, the poor, and unreconstructed liberals—high tax rates for the upper middle class and rich, Social Security, Medicare, jobs. "Simon believes that when Democrats stand up for the same things they've always stood for, we win," says Fingerhut. "If we try to make-believe we're Republicans or neoliberals or other watered-down versions, we'll lose." The obvious flaw in this strategy is that Walter Mondale tried it in 1984 with famously bad results. Simon's rebuttal is to ask how the election would have turned out if Reagan had run on Mondale's issues and Mondale on Reagan's. "The reason Mondale lost was not the positions he took," Simon told a gathering of Democrats in a back yard in Waverly, Iowa, in August. "It was a personality thing."

Alone among the candidates, Simon recognized the importance of the AFL-CIO videotape, which is being shown at thousands of union meetings. He and Fingerhut labored over the script to make sure he touched every base. He talked about protecting jobs and preserving smokestack industries and representing the interests of working people. He ran down the list of Democratic programs popular with labor. The impact has been dramatic. At meeting after meeting, Simon's support has risen 30 to 40 percent after the tape is shown. Fingerhut says that labor officials such as Sam Dawson, the political director of the United Steelworkers, suddenly began to take Simon's candidacy seriously. "The perception was changed," Fingerhut says. "It showed he could appeal to working folks, not just to Washington insiders and intellectuals."

Simon says he's been "variously described as a traditional Democrat, a Harry Truman Democrat, a Hubert Humphrey Democrat. I don't run away from any of those." Indeed, Simon has an almost childlike faith in the sort of social programs that flourished from the 1930s to the 1960s. He talks wonderingly about what activist government can achieve. If a program of providing free telephones to the poor were created, he wrote in his book on jobs, "we could reduce crime, provide safety for a health or fire emergency, enrich the lives of many of our citizens—and provide jobs to tens of thousands of people." In the second debate among the seven Democratic candidates in Des Moines on August 23, Simon said the federal government "ought to encourage creativity in small-business America. We need some specific programs to do that." Perhaps he envisions a new Department of Creativity. He didn't say.

TWO NEW PROGRAMS are at the top of his agenda. One would guarantee a job to every American, eight hours a day for four days each week at the minimum wage. On the fifth day the worker would be free to look for a higher-paying private-sector job. Initially, at least, the program would be voluntary. Simon says it would cost only $8 billion a year, while at the same time eliminating the deficit. How? In the Iowa debate he said that $30 billion is saved ($28 billion is the figure he uses in his book) from each drop of one percent in the unemployment rate. If five million people were taken off the jobless rolls, he said, the deficit would vanish because of taxes paid by the new jobholders and the reduction in welfare and other benefits for the unemployed.

Unfortunately, Simon is dreaming about this. The $30 billion is a wild estimate. Simon attributes it to President Reagan, who's hardly an authority on the relationship between the deficit and the job market. Moreover, public jobs programs are always touted as costing little and achieving much. As conservative columnist Warren Brookes has pointed out, the most recent example, the Emergency Jobs Act of 1983, was found by the Government Accounting Office to have cost $4.5 billion and produced 35,000 net jobs. That comes to $128,000 per job.

The other program Simon champions is long-term nursing care for the elderly. Since Social Security was enacted, the life expectancy in the United States has risen from 58 to 75, he says. Thus there are more elderly and they live longer and longer. The lack of nursing care under Medicare is a "huge unmet" need. Simon says he would propose "a comprehensive, long-term social insurance program" in the first 60 days of his presidency. He says the program would be "self-financing," but he hasn't said how.

Simon is lucky that the first contest of the campaign is in Iowa, which has economic troubles and a relatively aged population. He's luckier still that Democratic caucus attenders are even older (average age 53), disproportionately left-liberal, and obsessively issue-oriented. He has a receptive audience. At the backyard gathering in Waverly, one of the first questions to Simon was about Namibia. He

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handled it nicely. Another questioner said he was tired of talk about America's enemies. The country has no enemies, he insisted. Simon was not above pandering to this fellow with platitudes. "OK, OK," he said. "We have to say there is the possibility of the Soviet Union being the enemy. . . . There is some paranoia on our side. There is some paranoia on the other side. What we have to do is understand each other better." If Ronald Reagan had once been an exchange student in Moscow, "my guess is we would be living in a different world today."

Simon may be trying too hard to woo Iowa Democrats. "Right now he's presenting himself as more liberal than he is," says Ray Strother, a Democratic media consultant (he did Hart's media in 1984) who likes Simon and may produce his TV spots. "I'm not sure that's the right thing to do. He's running a good Iowa race." Simon's foreign policy views, for instance, thrill Iowa's peace activists, an important bloc in the caucuses. Simon wants a big cut in military spending, favors sending Peace Corps volunteers and doctors to Central America but no aid to the *contras*, would scrap Star Wars and the MX missile, is eager for an immediate ban on nuclear testing, and would let the United Nations handle the trouble in the Persian Gulf. The chief Soviet threat, he says, is that Mikhail Gorbachev might be ousted by "military adventurers" who would attack Iran. Simon is a strong supporter of Israel and opposes U.S. military aid to any Arab country that won't join the peace process.

Will all this sell outside Iowa? Maybe, maybe not. Simon doesn't want a repeat of the George McGovern candidacy of 1984. McGovern made a splash in Iowa with a surprising third-place showing, then faltered and dropped out of the race. Simon's task is to come off as a man of compassion and conviction, but not as a hardened ideologue. He managed this in 1984 in his upset victory over Republican Senator Charles Percy. In his most effective TV ad in that race, Simon declared that "there's a lot of pressure to sell out. You have to know what you believe in. My opponent says this makes me old-fashioned. But I'd rather lose with principles than win by standing for nothing." David Axelrod, who managed Simon's campaign against Percy, says the senator is like Reagan in one sense. People are willing to vote for him because he stands for something, even if they disagree with what he stands for. "Simon's greatest strength has nothing to do with issues. People respond to something in him that says, 'This isn't your normal bullshit politician.' "

SIMON'S CHALLENGE is to survive long enough after Iowa to get a second wind in the industrial state primaries that begin in Illinois on March 15. Three things may help, especially in the Super Tuesday primaries in the South on March 8. One is that Simon is a fiscal conservative of sorts. True, he's a big spender, but he says he's willing to find the money to pay for programs. He promises to issue a proposal on taxes this fall. Simon voted for Gramm-Rudman and worked closely with the White House last year to get a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution through the Senate. It failed by one vote.

The second is that he has a great story to tell about himself. Simon dropped out of Dana College in Nebraska at 19, bought a small weekly newspaper in Troy, Illinois, and crusaded against organized crime. He urged others to take on a mob-supported candidate for the Illinois legislature. When no one stepped forward, he ran and won at age 25. He soon advanced to the state Senate, and was elected lieutenant governor in 1968. After losing the governorship, he moved to a congressional district in southern Illinois in 1974, brushed aside accusations of carpetbagging, and won a House seat. In 1984 he beat the party organization's candidate in the Senate primary, and then was ardently supported by both of the bitterly antagonistic Democratic factions in Chicago, Mayor Harold Washington's and Edward Vrdolyak's, against Percy. He achieved this while making it clear to each side that he was dealing with the other.

The third is that he seems conservative. Instead of new ideas, he talks about old ideas (the WPA is the model for his jobs program) and old politicians (FDR, Truman, Kennedy, Illinois Senator Paul Douglas). He sometimes sounds goody-goody when he plays the courage theme. He says he told the unnamed senator who advised a vote for tax reform, "This is not in the national interest." He's also vague about who exactly recommended he get rid of the bow tie and glasses. I talked to his last two campaign consultants, and they pleaded not guilty. Anyway, I'm convinced Simon is one of the most honest people in politics. His fuddy-duddy integrity is appealing.

Simon should not be underestimated. His friendliness is contagious. When he came to the Senate, he learned that Republican Senator Barry Goldwater's mother was from Illinois. He had a plaque noting that erected in her hometown, took a picture of it, and gave the picture to Goldwater. Later Goldwater joined Simon for a parade in the town. And Simon has a sense of humor. In the legislature, he sat near Alan Dixon, now the other Illinois senator. Once Dixon showed Simon a death threat he'd gotten from a man who said he would be in the public galleries every day. "Well," said Simon, "I hope he's a good shot." Simon also loves the confusion caused by his name. No, he's not Jewish. He's the son of Lutheran minister. Not long ago he was asked if he was Albanian. "What the heck," Simon told me, "I said yes."

Simon even comes across well on TV. He sticks out from the crowd of candidates precisely because he is so different-looking. And he is shrewd and resourceful in making the most of other opportunities as well. In Washington he's been known to show up for a State of the Union address hours early so he can get a seat on the aisle and be seen on national TV shaking hands with the president. He is not above packaging. It's just that his package is more honest than others. Hunter Thompson reacted to Simon like a vampire to a cross. He went limp, and his cynicism disappeared. "Simon could be as ugly as the Elephant Man . . . and he would still stand alone among among the Democratic hopefuls," Thompson wrote in the *San Francisco Examiner*. He said Simon has "an awesome sense of integrity and commitment and utter conviction. That is pure magic in politics." And Simon is playing it for all it's worth. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Novel Treatments

Fidelity can be a burden. No film of E. M. Forster's *Maurice* that is faithful to the novel could be satisfactory because this posthumous novel is flaccid. Ismail Merchant and James Ivory, producer and director, have fallen into the fidelity snare. They had success with their film of *A Room with a View*, the weakest of the Forster novels published during his life-

Maurice
(Cinecom)

Tough Guys Don't Dance
(Cannon)

time, to which they were relatively faithful; now they are even more faithful to a much weaker book. More venturous film artists might have viewed *Maurice* from a modern perspective, as "concept" directors—sometimes fruitfully—do in the theater. Or, probably best, the book might have been let alone. Doggedly, Merchant and Ivory plodded on. *A Room with a View* has plentiful strengths to compensate for its flaws; *Maurice* is an elongated sketch for a novel whose very point is deliberately betrayed by the author. The film is its mirror image.

Maurice chronicles the growth of a boy-youth-man into awareness, acceptance, and fulfillment of his homosexuality. Forster wrote it in 1913-14, after he had written four of his five major works; only *A Passage to India* lay ahead of him. In a postscript to *Maurice*, Forster assures us quite credibly that the title character is not autobiographical. He adds:

> A happy ending was imperative. I shouldn't have bothered otherwise. I was determined that in fiction anyway two men should fall in love and remain in it for the ever and ever that fiction allows, and in this sense Maurice and Alec still roam the greenwood.

By Forster's own admission—declaration, rather—*Maurice* has a "determined" fictional ending. A happy ending for a novel that Forster had to write secretly and dared not publish in his lifetime! Obviously that ending contradicts the facts of English law and society that constricted Forster as author and homosexual, and that ending almost nullifies the agon in the novel that precedes it. Maurice has money, so he and his lover will go into exile somewhere. The novel's lesson, then, is: if you're homosexual, make sure that you're rich. And go to live outside England.

Structurally, the novel is so episodic that the reader is enlisted overmuch into filling out ellipses. Maurice himself is dull. Gently teasing and evocative though the Forster style often is, occasionally touched with sly/deep Forster insights, the title character does not tingle into life. His story is a series of views of an almost clinical case history—until the "determined" finish.

Faithful Merchant and Ivory have overdone their compliance with Forster by casting a dullish actor as Maurice. James Wilby has a face and personality that seem kept in place with putty. The most apt thing about him is his accent, which is rightly suburban, in contrast with that of the glossy Hugh Grant, who plays Clive, the toff who is Maurice's first lover. (Forster "saves" Clive by letting him marry.) Rupert Graves plays Alec, Clive's servant, with a growly rustic accent, so Forster's trinity of class is well-enough personified. Accent figures, too, in Ben Kingsley's performance of the hypnotist, who is made a thorough Yank though Forster says his accent is "slightly American." Denholm Elliott is in the cast, invaluable as ever. He gives Edwardian bluffness to Maurice's no-nonsense family doctor.

The adaptation was made by Ivory and Kit Hesketh-Harvey—Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, for some 25 years the screenwriter for Merchant-Ivory, is absent. As a director, Ivory's fluency, if not his fire, continues to grow: the last long sequence, beginning with a shot from a terrace through French windows, is neatly handled. The production design, as in most Merchant-Ivory films, is rich. The interiors are all mahogany and sterling silver; the very textiles of the suits and dresses are social statements. But of course these matters don't compensate for the inert center of the film, which is Forster's inert novel.

I can't comment on the fidelity of *Tough Guys Don't Dance* to its source. To do that, I'd have to read the novel, something I consider beyond the call of duty, even for an early Norman Mailer admirer. Still, without reading the book, it's easy to recognize in the film some Mailer hallmarks: sex on display, sex as weapon, exceptional violence, satyriasis, corruption. To these he adds decapitation. In this entertainment (Graham Greene's term), we're supposed to see the serious novelist at play, and he plays with many of the themes he takes seriously elsewhere.

Mailer made the screen adaptation and directed. At least he is credited with the direction. Alone. We must then assume that the vast superiority of his directing here over his three films of the 1960s is not due in some measure to the presence of John Bailey, the gifted cinematographer who is called "visual consultant," and of Francis Coppola, who was an ex-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Hamburger Hill. Gripping, detailed re-creation of a notorious battle in the Vietnam War. John Irvin's nearly flawless direction, Jim Carabatsos's equivalent script, a cast of unknowns give us sane men trapped in insanity. (Reviewed 9/14&21/87)

Matewan. John Sayles wrote and directed this account of a miners' strike, West Virginia, 1920, with great seriousness though less art. Haskell Wexler's cinematography is superb. (9/7/87)

Roxanne. *Cyrano de Bergerac* updated? Set in a Washington town with a fire chief as the hero? Steve Martin wrote and stars? And it's charming? Yes. (6/29/87)

Wish You Were Here. A headstrong teenage girl, in an English seaside town, 1951. Emily Lloyd is comically troublesome and troubling in a ribald but moving rite of passage. (8/3/87)

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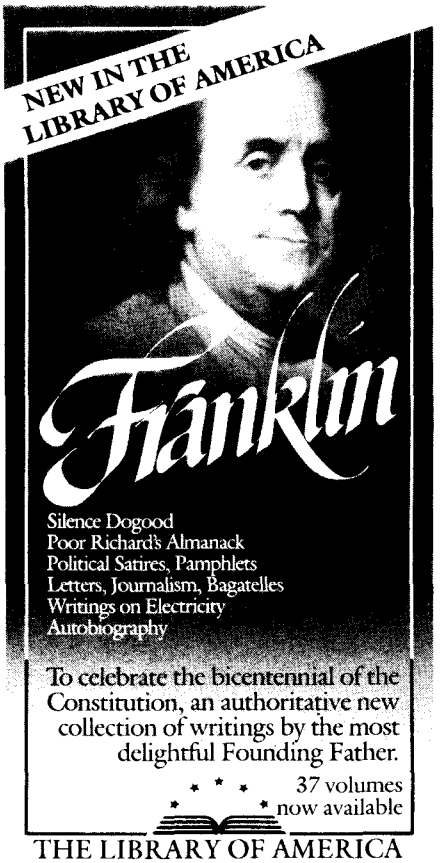
ecutive producer. In terms of shooting, the film is professionally passable. But some of the performances that Mailer permits are loony without being interestingly mad, and the pace is often ponderous.

"I keep saying to myself: death is a celebration." This line, spoken by the protagonist, comes to us out of the dark before we see anything. With this pulp-magazine profundity—meaningless except perhaps as a Rorschach reading of Mailer himself—the film is on its way. Set in Provincetown and hinging to some extent on big-money drug-dealing, the narrative is so convoluted, with flashbacks and oddball characters, that even if it were gripping it would be hard to follow. Credibility is never the issue: we just watch and listen to a lot of spurious starkness.

All through this grotesquerie we keep hoping that we're watching a parody, but, though many moments are laughable, there is no reason to think the intent is parodic until very near the end. Then, as five bodies are tossed from a small boat into the sea, we hear "Land of Hope and Glory" on the sound track. This is irritating. It comes so late that it seems an ex post facto attempt to claim that the film is a put-on, to insert a tardy stopgap against criticism. (And why the British equivalent of "God Bless America"?)

The leading woman, Debra Sandlund, is sexy and moderately talented; with a competent director, she might do well in either comic or moving parts. Isabella Rossellini, looking her worst, is even weaker than her role. Wings Hauser, as the local police chief, shows a glint or two of promise. The one pleasant surprise is Ryan O'Neal, the protagonist. As a writer married to a wealthy and wild woman, battered by her life, O'Neal manages more authenticity than he has shown in more authentic films.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EDWARD ROTHSTEIN ON MUSIC

The Zeitgeist Quartet

Keeping afloat in a concert world flooded with run-of-the-mill competence is no easy task for most performers. Even genius is no substitute for a "bit," a catch, a gimmick, a "hook." And a good hook is hard to find. No matter how carefully it is tossed upon the waters of the music business, it will quickly sink into oblivion—unless it is held up, however slightly, by fashion. In this respect, the now thriving Kronos Quartet—whose very name proclaims its devotion to the currents of time, to the zeitgeist—has found the perfect lure. These string players, of considerable technical and imaginative gifts, have cast a wide net, not just a hook, and drawn an audience quite different from that of the Guarneri, or the Concord, or the Cleveland, or any of the other string quartets regularly catching the attention of the public.

It might seem that they have accomplished this feat by overturning a tradition, so to speak. For until now the musical form of the string quartet has had quite a stuffy image, owing perhaps to the great intellectual energies that have gone into it since the 18th century, and to the sinuous dark coloration of the strings, unspiced with other timbres. Even the players traditionally have seemed dour, severe, genuflective before their high musical calling. But the Kronos players retain this solemn look, while giving it a twist. It is not the Olympian challenges of high art that haunt their visages as they peer out from their publicity posters and successful Nonesuch record albums. Instead, it is the grim sorrows of our time that can be read in their puckishly stern glances.

The music itself is another affair. It is iconoclastic, eclectic, even a bit campy. The Kronos players are the most postmodern of quartets, dwelling just this side of a kind of high punk. The group's appearance is no small part of this style; it has become the subject of cultish attention at concerts. When I saw Kronos as part of the Festival of Contemporary Music at Tanglewood this summer, the impact was immediate and visual. The first violinist, David Harrington, wore leather pants and a padded black and silver jacket, his red hair razor-flat on top; the second violinist, John Sherba, a loose, shin-length black robe; the violist,

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—Dr. M. Carlota Baca,
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Hank Dutt, baggy white pants and a black jacket; and the cellist, Joan Jeanrenaud, skin-tight black pants wrapped in black gauze. The look was eclectic but fashionably hip, off-putting but congenial, the clothes self-consciously individual but obviously the instrument of a single style and a common perspective.

THAT PERSPECTIVE has found much empathy. After less than a decade of performance, the Kronos Quartet could be the envy of senior colleagues. The players present annual concert series in Minneapolis, Seattle, New York, and San Francisco. They play at UCLA and at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, at Harvard and at Darmstadt. Their earlier recordings for smaller record labels have been succeeded first by an untitled recording for Nonesuch and then by another, just released, *White Man Sleeps*; both have been unusual successes. The playing is admirably precise and energetic. But technique has little to do with the group's appeal.

For Kronos specializes in "new" music. This could, in itself, constitute a "hook," given the novelty of new music on the concert stage. But this is also a very particular kind of new music; it is as eclectic and self-consciously unconventional as the players' clothes. *White Man Sleeps*, for example, takes its title from two minimalist compositions by Kevin Volans; the compositions' principal arguments are made not by the nervous and inconsequential music, but by their pointed title and the composer's South African birth. There are two longish works on the album—the knotty Third String Quartet of Bartók and the folkily exotic "Pano Da Costa" written for Kronos in 1985 by Jon Hassell, a composer who has touched bases with nearly every avant-garde movement since the Second World War, studying with Karlheinz Stockhausen, playing with Terry Riley, and later devoting himself to Asian and "Third World" musics. Included here too is a raucous Scherzo by Charles Ives and some enterprising variations on "Amazing Grace" by Ben Johnston, whose avant-garde career has included extensive experience with microtonal tunings—breaking up the 12-tone division of the scale. Kronos's last recording boasted a work by Philip Glass of minimalist fame, a quartet by Peter Sculthorpe, an Australian composer much influenced by the music of Bali, and a work that has become Kronos's calling card: Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Haze" (arranged by Steve Riffkin). When this jarring riff, once for electric guitar, was offered in concert at Tanglewood, there were listeners whooping at the strings' every simulation of amplifier feedback.

IN A suggestive way, the Kronos Quartet is a cultural successor to another chamber group that had a similar following a generation ago: Tashi. Like Kronos, Tashi grew out of the fashions of its time—in Tashi's case, the counterculture. Like Kronos, Tashi adopted an exotic name; the word is Tibetan for "good fortune." And if Kronos dresses with all the artifice and edginess of fancy punk, Tashi dressed in long-haired celebration of nature, garnished with spiritual manners imported from the East. And Tashi, too, had its own calling card, of a rather different order from "Purple Haze," Messaien's "Quartet for the End of Time."

But finally these musical products of the dominant "avant-garde" (really pop-mainstream) cultures of their times are significantly different. The aura around Tashi was devotional, suffused with spiritual and musical quest. Two of its members—Peter Serkin and Richard Stoltzman—have developed into extraordinary musicians. Tashi's playing was rigorously guided by the structure of the music. Its performances possessed a clear, unrelenting logic through which nature mysticism and a hushed apocalypticism expressed itself. Tashi was nothing if not serious.

The Kronos Quartet is another matter. It is also a kind of heir to the counterculture: Jimi Hendrix died in 1970, after all, and many of the composers who interest the group came to maturity in the 1960s and were influenced, like the Tashi players, by the musics of Asia. But Kronos bears the same relation to Tashi as postmodernism does to the counterculture; there are common origins, but one is the inversion of the other. If the counterculture celebrated nature over the manners of (Western) culture, postmodernism ignores nature altogether, romping ironically and urbanely through the supposed detritus of culture, choosing weird or leftover objects of art over health foods. It sees all cultural products as equivalent; all are ornaments or commodities (or ornaments on commodities), equally worthy of irony or unworthy of attention. For in this view they are all, ultimately, products of an exhausted tradition.

Consider the repertory of Kronos: it blithely mixes Hendrix and Bartók, Ornette Coleman and Charles Ives, Philip Glass and Thelonius Monk. The classical tradition itself is present mainly in its absence. To the extent that it is present at all, in the works of Bartók or Shostakovich, the classical tradition is appropriated, or rather misappropriated, by its context; it is set within dabblings in jazz and pop and non-Western musics or tunings. No further distinctions are made between musics, because none are needed. The aesthetic dimension is irrelevant, discarded in favor of the surfaces and the gestures of popular styles. Minimalism is a part of this phenomenon: it is music not of structural drama, but of repetitive mantric pulse. Quest is replaced by immersion. This music elevates the notion of non-distinction. This is particularly true of the music of Terry Riley, who has become one of Kronos's central composers. (A long excerpt from a nearly two-hour string quartet was played at Tanglewood, and Kronos's recordings have paid homage to him again and again.) Turned sentimental, this philosophy yields the gauzy, static philistinism of "new age" music.

THERE IS, in fact, only one way in which Kronos and its postmodern confreres should be taken very seriously, and that is in their relationship to the audience, in the function they are claiming for the music itself. The invocations of jazz and pop and rock and folk and avant-garde are meant to establish a certain community of listeners, for whom the allusions and stylistic play are of personal significance. This community, present in a concert hall, but presented with iconoclastic concert dress and iconoclastic concert repertory, participates in a new setting of musical culture. The music played has few aesthetic boundaries or pretensions, few expectations of the audience other than the sharing of place and custom. This music asks for no judgment of any kind. It asks only for participation.

Now these are the very elements that characterize folk musics: music for a particular group played in a particular place, in which the performance is of communal rather than reflective or aesthetic importance. The elements of folk music, in fact, appear again and again in the Kronos repertory, heard in the exoticism of Hassell's quartet, the Balinese allusions of Sculthorpe's Eighth Quartet, Johnston's variations on "Amazing Grace." This is no accident. Kronos is attempting to present a kind of folk music for postmodern culture, unifying the listeners as a community of knowing ironists.

This is why such figures as Ives and

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Bartók and Shostakovich also show up on Kronos concert programs—not because they are representative of the Western art tradition, but because they are seen as precursors to postmodern folk musics. Ives's use of American folk tunes in harsh contrapuntal settings, Bartok's quest for saving the folk music of Hungary and working its spirit into his quartets, Shostakovich's chilling invocation of simple tunes—worked into the context of these concerts this music becomes part of postmodern music history, premonitory syntheses by earlier practitioners of the craft. In concert and on record, even Bartók's Third Quartet is played that way: this taut, disturbing work becomes a series of fragments stitched together. Kronos does not reveal the developmental drama; it focuses only on the work's violent weirdness. Bartók is made into a colleague of Jon Hassell.

Postmodern culture, in fact, is too full of irony, too lacking in notions of real tradition and real community, actually to have a folk music, or to take its own music too seriously. The Kronos repertory finally seems not like folk music for a postmodern culture, but like a postmodern imitation of folk music. The calculated imitation eventually reaches over into pop. Kronos has actually managed to cross that line, attracting audiences and acclaim. But it is a line drawn solely by fashion; there is, and can be for them, no other arbiter. The hook has worked. But hooks, like times, change. And so, I am sure, will Kronos.

How to understand Jacques Derrida.

TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES

BY ALEXANDER NEHAMAS

JACQUES DERRIDA has been the focus of furious controversy ever since he startled his audience, at a conference in 1966 intended to mark the coming of age of structuralism in America, by arguing that it was already too late, that structuralism was already effectively dead. In the years that followed, Derrida became an institution in his own right. His lectures attract huge crowds. At least 13 of his books have been published in English, including these newly translated, though not so recently written, works; and books about him are appearing wherever you look. Many of Derrida's terms—"grammatology," "logocentrism," "margin," "*différance*," and, of course, "deconstruction," after which a whole approach to literary criticism has been named—are now commonplace in many academic disciplines, and they are entering wider, even journalistic, usage as well.

The passions surrounding Derrida have been extraordinary, uniting in their intensity his partisans and his detractors. Some consider him to be one of the truly great writers of the second half of the century. Others dismiss him as a charlatan. Many see his work as a profound, innovative, and perhaps constructive critique of many of our most basic ideas and institutions. Others suspect it of fostering relativism, irrationalism, and nihilism, all alluringly clothed in the haute couture of French irony, polymathy, and sophistication.

Both camps agree that Derrida is radically subversive. They are united in finding in the content of his work, as well as in its form, a general attack on the notions of truth, clarity, reason, definiteness, and understanding. The two camps disagree only over the value of these notions, not over Derrida's attitude toward them. Those who want to defend the values of truth and reason, and the institutions that serve them, despise him; those who think that Derrida's writings are the unmaking of these values, and the institutions connected with them, adore him. In fact, a careful reading of Derrida's work shows that he is less relativist and nihilist than his opponents fear, and less innovative and original than his proponents wish.

Many literary critics, and a few philosophers, have hailed Derrida for having liberated us from "the logocentric tradition of Western metaphysics"—a sweeping generalization that, not without some justification, goes against every instinct and value of analytical philosophers. "Logocentrism" is derived from the Greek *logos*, which means "word" or "definition," the true account that states correctly what each thing really is. In the Gospel of St. John, *logos* is identified with God, who is taken as the ultimate source of all truth. And since the *logos*, as John writes, was "in the beginning," error arises from the Fall from God. The *logos* has ceased being "present" to us; the truth, which was there first, has now been hidden.

Logocentrism, accordingly, is the view, held to be dominant in philosophy and in most "serious" activities, that there is such a thing as the objective truth about the world. Moreover, whether or not this truth can ever actually be recaptured, logocentrism is supposed to include the desire to return to it, and to confront it directly, without distortion, once and for all. Derrida's advocates claim that he has shown conclusively that such a conception represents an impossible, self-undermining dream.

This is where deconstruction enters the picture. Consider, for example, "phonocentrism," one of logocentrism's specific manifestations. (Derrida is an inveterate purveyor of technical terms, which always seem to provide his supporters with something to say and his opponents with something to be suspicious of.) Phonocentrism begins from the fact that thought cannot be communicated directly. Among the indirect expressions of thought, phonocentrism considers speech or voice (*phoné* in Greek) the best, because it seems that spoken sounds, which coincide temporally with our thoughts, do not obscure them and do not therefore mask the meaning we want to express. Thought is "present," or as "present" as it can possibly be, when it is being expressed in speech. Moreover, we can always avoid unclarity by answering questions, until our meaning is finally clear to our listeners.

But writing, according to phonocentrism, is different. In contrast to speech, writing is essentially opaque. It interposes an additional layer of signs between us and the meaning we need to understand. Written marks have a solidity of their own, masking the meaning that originally animated them. Thus writing functions, and is intended to function, in the "absence" of the person

Alexander Nehamas is professor of philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania and author of *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Harvard University Press).

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with whom it originated. It necessarily requires interpretation; and, especially in the author's absence, it can always be misinterpreted and misappropriated.

A "deconstruction" of the dichotomy between speech and writing aims to undermine the primacy of the preferred, or "valorized," term. The strategy is to show that the very features that have been supposed to make writing unreliable are in fact present in speech as well, and that this fact is always suppressed by logocentrism.

According to deconstruction, speech too consists of signs with their own material nature, signs that can be iterated in isolation from the context of their original use. Derrida argues that many authors who have devalued writing as a mere "supplement" to speech, like Rousseau or Saussure, have also demonstrated a fear that writing somehow is able to pervert the living voice. Their fear is justified, Derrida continues, only on the supposition that writing can affect speech because the two share the same nature.

Does this, then, make writing better than speech? Many have taken Derrida to make just this claim; but his answer is that it does not. Deconstruction refuses to reverse the hierarchy implicit in logocentrism. This, after all, would be to perpetuate logocentrism in a new guise, since logocentrism is essentially the view that *some* method for reaching the truth is better than others. Instead, deconstruction reveals that, despite their superficial differences, speech and writing are both special cases of a general set of conditions for communication, rather pompously called "archi-writing," to which the possibility of misunderstanding is endemic.

In sum, there simply is no such thing as communication or knowledge that is guaranteed to be successful, there is no undistorted perception of the truth, there is no identification, as Hegel would have put it, between subject and object. Truth is not prior to error, capable of being grasped by itself; the two go hand in hand. Neither can exist without the other. On its own terms, therefore, the privileging of speech over writing, since it ultimately attributes to both the same features, shows that the opposition it sets up is untenable or, as Derrida often puts it, "undecidable."

DERRIDA has been concerned to display the undecidability of a whole host of distinctions, notably the pairs presence/absence, concept/sign, intelligible/sensible, center/margin, and others. In close and detailed readings of philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and Husserl, he has argued that in each case the first member of each pair is considered more valuable, and a better guide to the truth, only because the features it shares with the second, which make both equally fallible, have been ignored or repressed.

Husserl, for example, privileges what is present to consciousness, and considers it as the basis from which all our knowledge and our understanding proceed. But he is able to do this, according to Derrida, only because he suppresses the fact that what is present is thought of as such by being implicitly contrasted with something that is no longer present (the past) as well as with something that is not yet present (the future). Both past and future are cases of "absence." And the only way the present can be at all conceived is by contrast to what is absent; what is present, Derrida would characteristically say, is a special case of what is absent. It has no special claim to priority of any sort. Moreover, Derrida argues, these philosophical works deconstruct themselves: read closely, they themselves provide the evidence that undermines the hierarchical distinctions that it is their official purpose to set up.

Since the two terms of each pair are always implicated in this way, Derrida claims that it is not possible to say definitely what the works that employ them ultimately mean. Saussure, for example, finally equated speech with writing. Does his text "really" mean that speech is better than writing? That writing is better than speech? Both? Neither? The answer is not clear; such works cannot be univocally interpreted. The very effort to use some definite standard—for example, the author's explicit intention—in order to determine their real meaning is itself a special case of logocentrism, since it is an attempt to state definitely the truth about them.

Glas
by Jacques Derrida
translated by John P. Leavey Jr.
and Richard Rand
(University of Nebraska Press, 262 pp., $50)

The Post Card:
From Socrates to Freud and Beyond
by Jacques Derrida
translated by Alan Bass
(University of Chicago Press, 516 pp.,
$46, $18.95 paper)

The Truth in Painting
by Jacques Derrida
translated by Geoff Bennington
and Ian McLeod
(University of Chicago Press, 352 pp.,
$49.95, $19.95 paper)

For Nelson Mandela
edited by Jacques Derrida, Mustapha Tlily,
and Jeanette M. Seaver
(Henry Holt, 256 pp., $17.95)

The Tain of the Mirror:
Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection
by Rodolphe Gasché
(Harvard University Press, 348 pp., $25)

Glassary
by John P. Leavey Jr.
with a foreword by Jacques Derrida
and an essay by Gregory L. Ulmer
(University of Nebraska Press, 320 pp., $50)

THIS CONTROVERSIAL cluster of ideas is to be found mainly in the works Derrida composed in the '60s and '70s (they include the books under review). These writings established deconstruction as the vanguard approach to literary criticism, which now saw philosophy, supposedly still trapped in the snares of logocentrism, at its mercy. But many philosophers remained either ignorant or disdainful of this new act of aggression. Nor did many literary critics join the new group, which they accused of being simply a mechanical application of a few tired principles. They saw deconstruction as an empty celebration of "the interminable play of *différance*," an obscure if ubiquitous principle that allegedly prevents any literary work from communicating a clear and single meaning. Taking interpretation as the effort to determine precisely such a clear and single meaning, and deconstruction as the desire to show that precisely such an interpretation is impossible, the opponents of deconstruction saw it as nothing short of an attempt to undermine the very idea of literary criticism.

Against certain Derrideans, if not against Derrida himself, this objection is often justified. But a look at the reception of the New Criticism in American universities in the '40s and '50s shows that such objections, such fears, are inevitable in criticism, as they are in many of the disciplines of the human sciences, where the difference between fact and fashion is not always easy to tell. More serious and more disturbing, however, is the charge that Derrida's views are relativist and nihilist. If written texts (or any acts of communication) cannot be definitively interpreted, if meaning is undecidable, is it not the case (as some

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deconstructive critics, in moments of intoxication, have claimed) that any text can be made to mean anything at all? How can even the view that meaning is undecidable itself be definitively communicated? The very statement of this view, if it can be understood at all, seems to undermine itself: to succeed in communicating the view that meaning cannot be communicated is to show that the thesis is wrong.

Equally important, Derrida's suspicion of the idea of objective truth that can be captured without distortion raises a further question: If truth does not exist, isn't every view as valid as every other? If truth is no longer available as a standard, we simply cannot any longer distinguish between better and worse ideas. Reason, and reasons, are discarded: this leads to irrationalism. Truth is abandoned: nihilism follows. Standards are lacking: relativism remains the only alternative. How can anyone, especially a professor who is sustained by the institutions these very views call into question, hold these views? The moral charge of bad faith is added to the philosophical objection.

IN FACT, however, in the light of much of what he has written, Derrida is not an advocate of irrationalism, relativism, or nihilism. The undecidability of meaning does not make of every text a blank slate on which any interpretation can be imposed. Undecidability is specific. Derrida does not, as many fear, "make the author nothing and the reader everything." It is not meaning in general that is undecidable: Derrida does not hold that nothing means anything in particular, that every text is at its readers' mercy. What is undecidable is only whether a text "really" means that speech communicates the truth better than writing—or, for that matter, the opposite, since the distinction between the two is being questioned.

The second issue, the matter of Derrida's rejection of truth, is very complicated. As Rodolphe Gasché definitively (if turgidly) shows in his study, Derrida attacks Hegel's idea that absolute, total, and non-distorting knowledge is achieved through Reason's reflecting on itself, through the identification of subject and object. Hegel's view is as obscure as anything ever written by a philosopher. The question whether it even makes sense has never been answered, Gasché's equanimity notwithstanding. But the main point, in Gasché's lovely metaphor, is that even the most perfect mirror requires a tain, the lusterless and invisible backing without which reflection would not be possible, and which is left out of the picture in Hegelian speculation on reflection. Once again, a purely positive result—perfect and transparent reflection—is made possible only by suppressing the opposing term—non-reflecting and invisible—that allows it to occur in the first place.

DERRIDA'S position on truth is not in fact very shocking at all. It belongs within a distinguished family of views that, deriving directly or indirectly from the writings of Nietzsche and William James, constitute the modern attack on essentialism. Essentialism is the idea that some features of the world are absolutely indispensable to it, that they are possessed by the world in itself, independently of any point of view. Further, essentialism is the idea that some methods of acquiring knowledge are better guides to the truth than others, because they are better suited to mirror these essential features of the world in a faithful manner.

Varieties of anti-essentialist arguments can be found in the writings of a number of recent American philosophers (notably W. V. Quine, Wilfrid Sellars, Nelson Goodman, Richard Rorty, and Hilary Putnam). In one way or another, these philosophers have claimed that knowledge has no "foundations," that there are no indubitable experiences of basic undistorted truths or facts on which the rest of our knowledge can securely be based. They deny that knowledge can ever be certain, that there are any absolute facts that everyone must always acknowledge.

What counts as a fact, according to the anti-essentialists, is always relative to a theory, to a particular system of representation. The facts of one theory may always appear, from another point of view, as a theory concerned with some further facts, themselves capable, in further contexts, of playing a theoretical role. We are very close to Derrida here. In his idiom, the notion is that the reality represented or described by any text can itself be, on analysis (or deconstruction), a text representing a further reality, itself subject to the same predicament. Hence his notorious slogan, "There is nothing outside the text."

It is important to realize that this view, in Derrida's case or more generally in the case of anti-essentialism, is not relativism or nihilism. Anti-essentialism does not deny that there are standards by

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which two competing approaches to the same subject matter can be evaluated. It only denies that there is a single standard by which all approaches, whatever their subject matter, can be judged. It is like denying that there is a single God for all people, and leaving people to order their lives according to their faiths in various deities. It is not like claiming that there are no gods at all.

These views are sometimes unclear, and often controversial. But they are neither absolutely new nor absolutely wild. Derrida is not subverting the values of truth and objectivity, at least any more than many respectable philosophers do. By the standards of modern philosophy, his views on truth and objectivity can even be called traditional. What, then, is all the fuss about? What is it about Derrida that stirs such passions?

PART OF the problem is that Derrida has been ill-served by many of his literary followers. He has read carefully many of the texts that he has "deconstructed." But generalizations similar to his own are constantly being made by people with no understanding of philosophy, who, having read a few of Derrida's essays, declare on the basis of the deconstruction of some minor text that "logic is a self-enclosed system" whose time has come and gone, or that "Western metaphysics" has finally been overcome—at which point what was merely suspicious becomes positively ludicrous.

Then there is the problem of Derrida's form. I have in mind not his difficulty, his dense, allusive, and indirect style, or his strange, idiosyncratic vocabulary. There is a certain philistine criticism of Derrida, a kind of anti-intellectualism really, that harps upon these features of his work; but these are features that characterize the writings of many respectable philosophers, indeed of some great ones. I am concerned, rather, with the fact that Derrida's works are often designed not to look like books or essays at all. And the obscurity of Derrida's form is designed to make a philosophical point.

Recall Derrida's view that logocentrism, the search for truth and for determinate meaning, undermines itself. This is not to say that logocentrism is something we can simply abandon. Of course we cannot turn our back on the search for truth. There is a profound paradox here, first articulated by Nietzsche. To try to show that the search for truth is, for whatever reason, misguided is to try to show, whether we like it or not, that it is true that the search for truth is, for whatever reason, misguided. In other words, an attack on truth is here being waged, inevitably, in the name of truth. And if the attack is successful, and the search for truth is somehow discredited, then the truth has won out again.

This is the point Derrida makes in a well-known passage:

> There is no sense in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to attack metaphysics. We have no language—no syntax and no lexicon—which is alien to this history; we cannot utter a single destructive proposition which has not already slipped into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest.

Derrida's effort to come to terms with this predicament accounts for some of the most characteristic, most brilliant, and most objectionable features of his work. For it is this problem that led him to conclude that straightforward discursive prose, argument, proof, all the traditional forms of scholarly communication—essays, monographs, books—are suspect. They are the very tools of logocentrism. Any effort to attack logocentrism directly, by these means and in these forms, will inevitably perpetuate it, and become itself the object of a deconstruction.

THUS DERRIDA has been experimenting with alternative forms of writing and composition. In addition, he has consistently maintained an ironic stance toward his own writings, inevitably prompting his readers to ask whether he can really mean what he says. But, as with all questions regarding "real" meaning, his reply, too, is undecidable: a shrug of the shoulders, in person or in prose. This question, he responds, is itself logocentric. But how can a scholar, one still wants to know, and a professor of philosophy at that, *not* be serious about his own ideas? And if he isn't, why should we be? But Derrida's response has a point. Though not self-consciously, we frequently take ideas seriously without any notion of their authors' attitude toward them; sometimes we don't even know whose ideas they were in the first place. Derrida's ironic attitude toward his views aims to bring this fact explicitly to our attention.

Readers of *Glas* (originally published in 1974), *The Truth in Painting* (1978), or *The Post Card* (1980) are bound to be disturbed both by the form of these works and by Derrida's ambiguous attitude toward his

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own views. Since Derrida constantly employs multilingual puns, wordplay, and intentional ambiguity (all in order not to produce univocal meaning), his works are also a translator's nightmare. This explains why these remarkably successful English versions took so long to appear. Only very determined readers will master these forbidding works. Yet it is likely that much of what they find there will strike them as a set of esoteric jokes.

It's almost as if these texts were composed by a professor gone mad in Borges's Library of Babel. In the Library, every possible bit of writing means something; it is not even possible accidentally "to combine some characters, *dhcmrlchtdj*, which the divine Library has not foreseen . . . and which in one of its secret tongues do not contain a terrible meaning." But the principle governing *The Post Card* in particular seems to be the exact contrary of Borges's fantasy. Not only does the work contain a nonsensical character-sequence, EGEK HUM XSR STR, but its central claim is that error and nonsense, the impossibility of determinate meaning, are built into the essence of every code of communication.

THE POST CARD is an immense meditation on this idea, particularly in connection with psychoanalysis. (*The Truth in Painting* pursues similar themes in art, its criticism, and its philosophy.) It includes brilliant readings of Freud and Lacan. But Derrida's method is perhaps best illustrated by *Envois*, the first and by far the longest part of the work, and a parody of the epistolary novel in which Derrida aims to expose what he calls "the Postal Principle." The Postal Principle is Derrida's metaphor for what he considers to be one of the founding ideas of our culture. This is the idea that acts of communication proceed from an undisputed sender to an equally undisputed recipient. Therefore they always occur in a definite context which fixes their meaning, and which it is the task of interpretation to determine and express without remainder. The Postal Principle is the assumption that every message hits its mark, that every letter is delivered to its addressee.

But there always is a remainder, Derrida believes, that is forever beyond our grasp. The message does not always hit its mark. The postcards of which *Envois* consists are sent by someone named "Derrida" (whose name is woven throughout the book's prose) to someone who could be his wife, his reader, or himself. The postcards all carry a reproduction of the cover of a book of prophecy depicting, contrary to everything we know, Socrates writing at Plato's dictation. This prompts Derrida to engage in a long questioning of our usual understanding of priority, order, and communication. Open to inspection, postcards often carry elliptical, indeterminate messages, especially when both their source and destination remain unclear. And right in the center of "the Postal System," showing that its failure is as inherent as its success, is the dead-letter office, containing those messages that have completely missed their mark.

Yet a careful reading of *Envois* shows that Derrida holds two views. The first is that any statement can function in many contexts, none of which is indisputably the proper one, and that in each context the statement in question will have a different meaning. The question of what the statement "really" means, therefore, cannot receive an answer, though the statement can still communicate something definite in each specific context. It is not, Derrida reasonably writes, "that the letter never arrives at its destination, but it belongs to the structure of the letter to be capable, always, of not arriving."

Derrida's second view is more radical, and much less defensible. The possibility of different contexts sometimes seems to suggest to Derrida that no statement ever has a determinate meaning: "a letter can always not arrive at its destination, and . . . therefore it never arrives. . . . The condition for it to arrive is that it ends up and even that it begins by not arriving." This position assumes that a statement would have a determinate meaning only if it communicated that very meaning in all possible contexts; or, to put it another way, only if that statement were meaningful in one and only one context.

But this is a remarkably strong criterion of what it is to have a determinate meaning. In fact, it is nothing other than the old "logocentric" ideal, according to which communication can be successful only through a perfect coincidence between a sign and its meaning. Amazingly, Derrida seems to confess to just this dream in *Envois*:

> I would like to write to you so simply, so simply, so simply. Without having anything ever catch the eye, excepting yours alone, and what is more while erasing all the traits, even the most inapparent ones, the ones that mark the tone, or the belonging to a genre (the letter, for example, or the post card), so that above all the language

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remains self-evidently secret, as if it were being invented at every step, and as if it were burning immediately, as soon as any third party would set eyes on it.

The contradiction in Derrida's thinking here is striking: the deconstructionist appears as a logocentrist. It is in this surprising, second, immoderate view of Derrida's that he parts company with the tradition of Nietzsche and James, and at which his critics should properly take aim.

GLAS, WHOSE EVERY page contains two columns, is surely the most remarkable-looking of Derrida's works. The left column discusses Hegel, particularly his notion of Absolute Knowledge. This logocentric ideal, *savoir absolu* in French, is abbreviated as SA, a homonym of *ça*, the French neuter pronoun, and is thereby connected with Freud's *id*, which is the Latinization of the corresponding German pronoun *es*. There is also a discussion of Hegel's views on the family (connected with the Immaculate Conception, or IC), of his own family situation, of the relations between the two, and of his name, which in France is pronounced like *aigle*, the word for eagle. The right column is concerned with Genet, whose name is a homonym of *genêt*, broomflower, and traces floral motifs in his works, including his *Notre-Dame-Des-Fleurs*, which, naturally, is connected with IC. Each column contains numerous inserts. The space between the columns also sometimes contains writing. There are innumerable puns, variations on the sound "gl," meditations on Derrida's own name, and an examination of the connections between authors' names ("signatures") and the themes and words in their works—this last having become one of Derrida's central preoccupations in recent years.

A number of people have written about this book. Nobody knows what it is about. Is *Glas*, after all, a "book"? Is it "about" anything? As Gregory Ulmer writes in *Glassary* (which traces every term and every reference in *Glas*—a most scholarly enterprise), *Glas* "is not composed in the conventional manner of the academic book because it is explicitly an anti-book. . . . The Book as such reflects a certain model of thought based on the platonic, and ultimately on the logocentric paradigm of thought." So then how are we to read this text? First one column all the way through and then the other? First one column on each page and then the other? Should we interrupt our reading of the columns to read the inserts? Should *Glas* and *Glassary* (large, square volumes) be displayed on coffee tables, to be read a little at a time over long periods?

Certainly Derrida's experiments with the printed form have produced some remarkable works. But his assumption that words, sentences, paragraphs, and books can, by themselves, reflect a commitment to logocentrism, that to write a book is already to accept "the logocentric paradigm of thought," is a grave mistake. All logocentric works have been composed in traditional forms, but not all works composed in traditional forms have been logocentric. A commitment to a philosophical theory is not reflected simply in the form in which ideas are presented, in words and books taken in themselves, independently of what they are used to say. It is, rather, reflected by the combination of form and content, by what we *do* with our words and our books, by what we say and what we believe.

Derrida writes seductively, playfully, hauntingly. He offers philosophical readings of literary authors and literary analyses of the heroes of philosophy. He seems to have convinced many people that he believes that philosophy is simply a species of literature, fiction mistaking itself for the pursuit of truth. Many (but not all) literary critics have been delighted, and many (but not all) philosophers have been infuriated, by this idea. But it is a wrong interpretation of his work. Derrida's writing resists such obvious classifications. It poses, once again, the question of the relation between philosophy and literature; but it gives no consistent answer.

In recent years Derrida has been writing about the place of philosophy within the university and within the general culture, about the function of universities, about political issues such as nuclear war and racism. Though always written in his characteristic style, these essays betray a new seriousness, as readers of the collection *For Nelson Mandela*, which Derrida edited and to which he contributed a long essay, are bound to notice. Could it be, then, that 21 years after his scandalous entry into the American academy, the enfant terrible may be growing up after all?

LET'S MAKE A DEAL

Man of the House: The Life and Political Memoirs of Speaker Tip O'Neill by Thomas P. O'Neill with William Novak

(Random House, 387 pp., $19.95)

Rayburn: A Biography by D. B. Haldeman and Donald C. Bacon

(Texas Monthly Press, 554 pp., $21.95)

Sam Rayburn was born in 1882, Tip O'Neill in 1912. Each was elected to his respective state legislature at the age of 24. Each became Speaker of his state's House of Representatives as a young man. When each in turn was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, neither ever showed the slightest interest in moving to the Senate. Each rose to be Speaker of the House, Rayburn for almost 17 years, broken only by two brief intervals of Republican majority, and O'Neill for ten years, the longest continuous term of any Speaker in the history of the office. These figures reflect one of the most significant facts of American politics in the past half century: the Democratic hold on the House, even during the last 35 years of Republican ascendancy in presidential elections. No Republican has had a chance to make a mark as Speaker of the House since Nicholas Longworth in the 1920s.

O'Neill's and Rayburn's terms in the House overlapped for only eight years. Yet their combined political careers carry us from Theodore Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan. Rayburn's first (and successful) race for the House in rural north Texas, say his biographers, "called for a mod-

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ern, streamlined campaign." In 1912 that meant using his savings to buy an open Model T Ford, a vehicle introduced three years earlier. By the time O'Neill's career ends in 1986, we are well into the contemporary political world of direct mailers, pollsters, and campaign consultants.

Congress (in particular, the House) is the most poorly reported institution in the United States. The influence of television news has been baleful. There is no way in which the multifarious daily activities of the House can be pictured in the brief slots of television. The camera is lost in the halls of Congress (except, of course, when there is a staged investigative hearing). Instead Lesley Stahl stands up on the lawn of the White House and gives a nightly report on its current incumbent, whether or not he has done anything, as if he can and does run the country without the advice, consent, intervention, and obstruction of Congress. But it is in the House, even more than in the Senate, that the business of the nation, in all its complexity, is most continuously done.

If one wishes to discover how power is distributed in a political system, one looks first for the power of the purse. In America it does not rest in the White House or the Senate, the Treasury or the Office of Management and Budget. It lies in the House, and particularly in the Ways and Means Committee, which has no equivalent in the Senate. When the American people split their votes, returning Republican presidents and Democratic congressmen, they know what they are doing. They may be willing to give a new president the chance to show what he can do, but they cling to their protectors in the House as insurance. (It is also true that the Democratic dominance of many state legislatures has enabled the party to engage in some helpful gerrymandering of congressional districts.)

Although Sam Rayburn once flirted with the idea of four-year terms for representatives, he soon realized that it is their closeness to the people in biennial elections that is the strength of their assembly and the justification of its immense powers. In the whole wise scheme by which the Founding Fathers distributed powers under the Constitution, no arrangement was more simple and yet more magical in its influence than the two-year, six-year, and four-year terms for representatives, senators, and presidents. No sooner in this biography is Rayburn back in the House from an easy or a challenging election—and we think that we can settle down to watch him and his colleagues attend to the nation's business—than he has to be off again to the black earth farmlands of north Texas to prove that he is still in touch with the people he claims to represent.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In his two terms as president, George Washington did as much to define the nature of the Constitution in practice as those who composed it did in theory. Although he did indeed insist on the just and necessary powers of the president, Washington consistently addressed Congress as a whole with deference, and he singled out the House in particular as the truly representative institution in the United States. Or again, almost as soon as Harry Truman became president, and his succession left the vice presidency vacant, he asked Congress to revise the 60-year-old presidential succession law and establish the Speaker of the House as third in line: only a truly representative, elected figure, he argued, was suitable for the office. (The bill met stiff opposition from senators "who wanted no part of legislation that would boost House prestige," and it died for the length of that Congress.)

As Truman had noted, the fact that each of the 435 members of the House receives his authority from his own district every two years is what gives the body its uniquely representative character, in the same way that the House of Commons in Britain derives its authority from the local constituencies of its members. "All politics is local" was a legend in the O'Neill family before it was adopted by Richard Daley in Chicago. Both of these books remind us that this axiom is expressed in the very composition of the House. The nature and the great powers of the office of Speaker, the true subject of both books, are derived from this fact.

Toward the end of his memoirs, O'Neill observes the changed character of the House, which was first clearly revealed in the post-Watergate Congress elected in 1976. Those representatives were the products of the new campaigning methods of direct mailing, polling, marketing, and television spots. Their apprenticeship in their state legislatures and party organizations, or to experienced politicians, was meager. Loyalty was hardly a virtue to them, whereas loyalty was the middle name of politicians such as Rayburn and O'Neill; and it is the indispensable virtue in the unwritten compacts and trade of mutual obliga-

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tions on which all politics rests, from the Rome of Julius Caesar to the Boston of Mayor Curley, where O'Neill began his career.

O'Neill's stories about Curley and his city add a dimension far beyond anything we can imagine from *The Last Hurrah*, just as the life of Huey Long by T. Harry Williams, one of the best biographies of an American politician, leaves behind even as wonderful a novel as *All the King's Men*. The whole of O'Neill's chapter on Curley is rich: from Curley's attack on a Unitarian opponent in his Irish Catholic city (Unitarians "are a curious sect who seem to believe that our Lord Jesus was a young man with whiskers who went around in his underwear") to his basic political philosophy: "Do unto others as they wish to do unto you—but do it first."

But it is not only of Curley that O'Neill tells us. It is of the other shrewd scoundrels who helped the poor Irish immigrants climb up the battlements of Yankee, Brahmin (Curley loved to pronounce the word) Boston. Who will ever forget O'Neill's description of a man named Martin Lomansey, who met the immigrants straight off the boat, took them to register to vote before he brought them over to the gas works to get them a job, and found them a place to live until they earned enough to pay their own rent. What payment did Lomansey ask for these favors? On Election Day he stood outside the polling station and said to each of them, "Here's your ballot. I've already marked it for you. When you get in there, pick up the ballot they give you and give them back this one." Then Lomansey took the clean ballot when each came out, marked it, and gave it to the next guy in line. Simple.

YES, O'NEILL gives us a picture of a period of "idealized corruption," as William Safire has said in a nice phrase. But there was something genuine in the old American phrase of the time, "honest graft," which cannot be said of the kind of corruption that now infests Washington, as people move in and out of government to trade their influence in high places to their own profit. With scattered but notable exceptions, the graft of the old pols was only incidentally and marginally to line their own pockets. It was all done more in Robin Hood style, and it is worth remembering that Robin Hood (both in legend and in fact, as the historians claim to have pieced it together) lived quite well in Sherwood Forest with his Merry Men. He took his cut, too.

So did John F. Kennedy. O'Neill's stories fill in the picture we already had of the ruthless energy and uninhibited expenditure with which Joseph Kennedy Sr. engineered his son's election to the House, then to the Senate, and finally to the presidency. JFK was not even present when his father announced that he was a candidate for the House in 1946; the elder Kennedy also said that no contributions less than $1,000 would be accepted. But one of O'Neill's most startling stories is about JFK himself. After a fund-raising breakfast in Missouri during the 1960 campaign for the presidency, O'Neill and Kennedy and the man who had arranged the occasion stepped into the men's room. When Kennedy was informed that the event had raised $17,000 in cash and $12,000 in checks, he said coolly, "Give me the cash and give Kenny O'Donnell the checks." But when one has been made familiar with the Boston of Curley and its Irish, the story falls into place.

RAYBURN'S biographers tell us (but they do not make enough) of the bursting political life of Texas when he grew up and served his apprenticeship. It was a time, as they say, when politics was of absorbing interest to Americans. The Civil War was past; the Union had been preserved. The immense surge of American industrial might was at its crest, bringing with it threatening and seemingly intractable social problems. The huge new trusts appeared to challenge the democratic political system. The immigrants were pouring in. The slums and the ghettos were teeming. Talk of revolution in Europe spread across the Atlantic. With the Manifest Destiny accomplished at home in the subjugation of the continent, the United States was tempted into imperial adventure, as the flag followed the commercial titans who were scouring the world for markets. All of this yielded the very different but similarly inspired energy of the New Nationalism of Teddy Roosevelt and the New Freedom of Woodrow Wilson.

What is extraordinary is that in remote Texas, which remained economically quite backward into the 1930s, all of this political excitement was as lively as elsewhere, as one knows already from the rich tapestry of Lyndon Johnson's background. Then the populist movement flourished in Texas. The state produced a host of vivid political characters, such as James Hogg and Joseph Weldon Bailey. In those years, as in the next 60, Texas contributed to Congress far more than its share of dominating politicians; the number of Texans who were key figures in the New Deal in Washington is astounding. Through tough men such as Rayburn, John Nance Garner, and Lyndon Johnson, Texas harvested its rewards.

All of this is told in the early chapters of the biography of Rayburn, though without the richness of anecdote in O'Neill's recollections of Boston (or, for that matter, in LBJ's own telling of stories). What we are being introduced to, in Rayburn and O'Neill themselves, and many of the other congressional figures who pass through the pages of both volumes, is the peculiar quality of political

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character. There is no doubt that these men had it, that they had it overflowing; and when one looks around Congress today, not least in the platoon of congressional candidates for the presidency, one wonders if political character, vivid, alert, apprenticed, experienced, is not now dead in America.

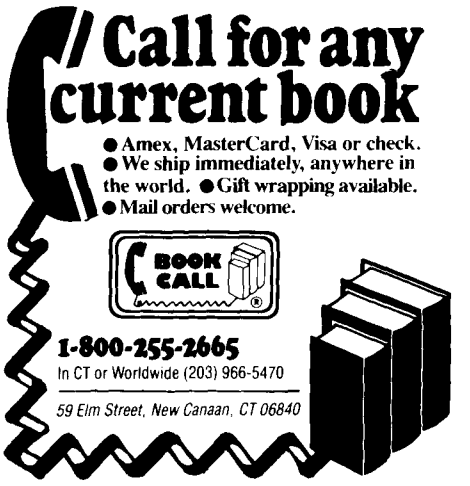
That is why politicians themselves, their biographers, and the reviewers of their books ought to give more space to the early lives of the men who rose to power. Political character is not just personal character brought to politics. It is the relationship and reaction of the politician to his time, to his society, and most specifically to the locality in which he was raised and in which he continued to act. One does not want to know the early life of a politician to offer psychological interpretations (psychohistory is the bane of Doris Kearns's books on both LBJ and the Kennedys), or pruriently to scavenge for flaws of personality, scandal, and corruption in the boy before he has even grown into long pants (as Robert A. Caro does in the first volume of his biography of Johnson). Instead we need to know the politician's own sense of his origins, of the place from which he comes, because that is a clue to the confidence with which he will use the power of the office he eventually attains.

AT A White House reception for the regent of Iraq in 1945, Truman introduced Speaker Sam Rayburn as "probably the most influential man in the United States, next to the president." These two books invite us to look again at the power and the importance of the office of Speaker. The first Speaker who really expanded the influence of the office, and sealed its partisan character forever, was Henry Clay. It is worth remembering that Clay left the Senate to be elected to the House; clearly he understood which is the superior chamber, as did John Quincy Adams when he left the presidency to seek election not to the Senate but the House. Clay's weapons in enlarging the powers of the Speaker were the force of his eloquence (which came, as with Webster and Calhoun, as much from intellect as from passion), and by his mastery of the rules of the House. After Clay, two later Speakers, Tom Reid and "Uncle" Joe Cannon, assumed even greater powers. One of the first lessons to learn in politics is that once the power of an office is established, it is rarely surrendered by the successors in it.

One feels friendly toward O'Neill, but it must be said that he emerges as a far lesser Speaker than Rayburn. The biography of Rayburn is stuffed with stories, far too intricate to summarize, of how his knowledge of the rules of the House, sometimes mercilessly used, enabled him to push through the legislation his party's president wanted. But at the same time Rayburn could hold up some proposal of FDR's that he regarded as politically preposterous; and some of FDR's notions—like packing the Supreme Court—were preposterous. It is in the astonishing record of achievement in domestic legislation that Rayburn's greatness most obviously stands out.

Whether in helping FDR push through the lend-lease or the draft extension bill, or in throwing himself behind Truman's courageous determination to contain the Soviet Union after 1945, or yet again in supporting Eisenhower in the continuation of a strong bipartisan foreign policy, Rayburn was a creative statesman in a way that O'Neill failed to be. With all that is attractive in O'Neill's biography, and all his pointed and quotable criticisms of presidents and their staffs, the eventually damning commentary on his speakership is that in ten years, from his position of vast authority, he did almost nothing to point the Democratic Party in a new direction to the future. Above all, he left it utterly uncertain of where it stands on foreign and defense policy.

If the Democratic Party still has an image of keeping America weak in the world, an image with which some of the Democratic presidential candidates are now trying to contend, then the major responsibility must be placed squarely on O'Neill's shoulders. It is a failure made particularly graphic by contrast with Rayburn. Educated within his own party, Rayburn in turn used his power as Speaker to educate his party. Loyal to his party beyond any possible aspersion, he also tugged it toward a realistic sense of the state of the nation, and of the world. O'Neill did not do that. Even if one ignores his lamentable record on foreign policy and applauds his efforts to save the programs intended to help the disadvantaged, still this leader of the Democrats did not push his party to rethink its social policy, and beyond that its philosophy of government. Instead he acted as if nothing had changed. For the Democratic Party, the years of O'Neill's speaker-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ship were the years the locusts ate.

Sam Rayburn was five feet six inches tall. Yet his bulk looms far larger over American politics of the past half century than O'Neill's. The partisan character of the office of Speaker was apparently intended by the Founding Fathers, as was demonstrated by Mary P. Follett's *The Speaker of the House of Representatives* (1896), the classic work on the history of the office. This represented a clear break from the British tradition that the Speaker should be a non-partisan presiding officer. In gathering power to the office, Clay and Reid and Cannon reinforced its partisan character. The power and the partisanship went together. But even men as partisan as Cannon and Longworth, both Republicans, used their power to bend and educate their own party, just as Rayburn did. In the end, O'Neill had the partisanship, but he did not have confidence in the power of the House, and of his office.

HENRY FAIRLIE

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

The Alchemy of Finance: Reading the Mind of the Market by George Soros

(Simon and Schuster, 350 pp., $22.95)

George Soros is an investment manager. But he is not your run-of-the-mill Wall Street gnome. He has made it like no one has. For those of us who wince when the Dow Jones average interrupts our daily television news, the jacket blurb describes Soros's spectacular success. The Quantum Fund, over which he presides, has grown from $4 million in 1969 to over $2 billion today; it has yielded a dizzying annual compound growth rate of 45 percent over nearly two decades. *New York* magazine, in an unaccustomed lapse into cultivated penmanship, was moved to describe Soros as the "Michelangelo, Renoir, and Beethoven of Wall Street all wrapped into one."

Now that Soros has made his fortune, he is eager to tell all. But his aspirations as a writer soar above a simple narrative of his financial dealings. He wants to think big, to speculate about the differences between scientific method in economics and in the natural sciences. He wishes to develop a theory that would embrace equally his mundane financial activities and grander themes such as the reform of the international economic system. It is tempting to treat Soros's analytic ambition as a manifestation of what sociologists call the Sanskritization process: wealth seeks status by acquiring the attributes of the higher classes—in this instance, their intellectual pursuits. But for Soros, the sequence has been exactly reversed.

A Hungarian émigré to the United States, Soros claims to have acquired his thirst for intellectual accomplishment en route, at the London School of Economics. He credits the influence of Karl Popper, but surely an economics undergraduate in England cannot have failed to note that financial and philosophical speculation have been combined in some of the great masters of the discipline. David Ricardo—to whom we owe the theory of gains from trade through specialization, a theory that Adam Smith sketched and Richard Gephardt foolishly (if unwittingly) rejects—was a successful stockbroker. Even John Maynard Keynes, as first bursar of King's College at Cambridge from 1924 to 1946, managed two investment funds to great advantage. Indeed, of these, the Chest Fund, where Keynes had a free hand, considerably outperformed the *Banker's Magazine* Ordinary Share Index. Here was the stuff on which dreams are made. Success on Wall Street has given Soros the sangfroid, and wealth the wherewithal, to pursue his dream. This book is the consequence. Alas, it prompts the question: Money talks, but can it write?

The core of Soros's book is concerned with what he wrongly (indeed, astonishingly) considers to be a major new discovery: the Theory of Reflexivity. If you wish to be bamboozled, consider his algebraic formulation. Let $x = f(y)$ and $y = g(x)$—that is, x is a function of y, and the other way around, too. In classrooms we call this a system characterized by simultaneity. I have successfully conveyed what it means to my students by recalling the country where men are bad lovers and women yet worse cooks. Reflexivity arises because poor lovers are penalized by bad food, and bad food is rewarded with indifferent love.

Soros uses reflexivity, however, with an important but familiar twist, central to his argument. Economic analysis must reckon, he thinks, with the fact that agents or "participants" understand and act in light of the economic situation. This defines a "cognitive" relationship. But their perceptions, in turn, can affect the situation itself. This defines a "participating" relationship. And these cognitive and participating functions (which correspond to Soros's algebraic equations), acting recursively (in sequence, that is), define "the theoretical foundation" of Soros's approach. "The two recursive functions do not produce an equilibrium but a never-ending process of change." Hence, "the outcome tends to diverge from expectations, leading to constantly changing expectations and constantly changing outcomes."

Of course this is not really a "theory" but a way of thinking, an analytical framework that draws attention to the critical role of feedback from subjective expectations to objective events. Economists have been considering such feedback for decades. The precise way in which the objective reality can be affected depends naturally on the nature of the feedback. Consider the classic case of a self-fulfilling prophecy: the analysis of exchange rates dating back to the 1960s. Let the objective reality initially be that the dollar will not depreciate. But suppose that speculators expect the opposite, and move out of the dollar, depreciating it. If the reality were independent of the actions of the speculators, the dollar would go up again, and the market would have chastised and ruined the speculators. But it may well be that as the dollar falls initially with the speculation, wages and hence prices rise in sympathy. If so, the objective reality would itself have changed, legitimating the devaluation of the dollar in view of the speculation-induced rise of prices. Such self-justifying speculation shapes its own reality.

Soros regards the stock market as an ideal place for such feedback effects.

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Stock prices can influence "underlying values," or "fundamentals" in Soros's language, in important ways. An unjustifiably high stock valuation, for example, can reinforce a firm's ability to raise finance and validate in turn the valuation. As the research of Lawrence Summers and Robert Shiller on asset pricing suggests, an unduly low valuation may lead to managerial shakeouts aimed at short-run profits and causing long-run neglect, which once again legitimates the initially inappropriate valuation. Evidently, booms and busts also can follow, for a vicious circle can arise in which one mistake, duly rewarded, leads to another until some overriding, unshakable constraint interrupts the process. Such reversals can come easily in financial markets, where confidence can evaporate as rapidly as it arises.

I HAVE NO quarrel with Soros when he reminds us that the analysis of the stock market must occasionally reckon with such reflexivity. I find it difficult to follow him completely, however, in his different, and far more debatable, view that his superior grasp of reflexivity is what gives him the edge over his rivals. Yes, he made a great deal of money during the conglomerate boom of the 1960s when reflexivity was working, with indiscriminately high stock valuations feeding the ballooning acquisition process. But so did many others.

Or take the fascinating case of Soros's "killing of a lifetime." After the Plaza Hotel meeting of the Group of Five in September 1985, Soros expected the yen to rise; he bought into yen and earned in one fell swoop more than enough to offset handsomely his accumulated losses on currency trading in the previous four years. Was this the result of reflexivity? Surely Soros owed this good fortune to guessing right about what these governments would do rather than to the reflexive effects of that deed in the market, or his better grasp thereof.

Perhaps Soros has just been plain lucky rather than smart. Having made money, he is in no mood to attribute his success to luck. But luck could well be what made Soros's fortune, if we are to believe the academic proponents of the so-called "random walk" or "efficient markets" theory of the stock market. That theory holds that the market fully discounts all future developments, and hence the individual's chances of over- or underperforming the market are even. Soros asserts that this theory "is manifestly false—I have disproved it by consistently outperforming the averages over a period of 12 years." Indeed, Warren Buffett, who managed Berkshire Hathaway Inc., has outperformed the Standard & Poor 500 for each of 29 years.

As it happens, however, the random walk theory permits Buffett and Soros to have an impressive string of successes without being in possession of better gray cells. To understand this theory, consider the analogy of tossing a coin: over a large number of trials, heads will come up as often as tails. But this does not rule out the possibility that Soros has had an unmitigated succession of heads in *all* trials. From the scientific point of view, it is simply impossible to decide between Soros's self-congratulatory "I-am-smart-because-I-understand-reflexivity" explanation and the rival "random walk" explanations of his success just by reading his accounts of his successes and failures. The issue remains as open and contentious among professors as it is among investors.

In *The Alchemy of Finance*, Soros goes beyond the stock market to larger issues. Though he offers an abundance of views, on matters ranging from currency reform to the American budget and trade deficits, he reminds me of another distinguished Hungarian émigré, Lord Balogh, of whom his foes said that his conclusions were more obvious than his arguments. Financial specialists, though, will be intrigued by the conclusion that Soros draws concerning the need to regulate financial markets, ever susceptible (thanks to reflexivity) to "excesses, which sooner or later become unsustainable." In his view, "after nearly half a century of what now appears as excessive regulation, we have been moving towards excessive deregulation. The sooner we recognize that some kind of regulation is necessary in order to maintain stability, the better are our chances of preserving the benefits of a nearly free market system." Here he parts company with Walter Wriston, who cheerfully led us into the Third World debt crisis, and walks over to Henry Kaufman's and Felix Rohatyn's corner. I believe rightly so.

JAGDISH BHAGWATI

Jagdish Bhagwati is Arthur Lehman Professor of Economics and professor of political science at Columbia University. His new book, *Protectionism: Interests, Ideology, and Institutions*, will be published by MIT Press in 1988.

THE PALM AT THE END OF THE MIND

After fulfilling everything
one two three he came back again
free, no more prophecy requiring
that he enter the city just this way,
no more set-up treacheries. It was
the day after Easter. He adored
the egg-shell litter and the
cellophane caught in the grass.
Each door he passed swung with
its own business, all the witnesses
along his route of pain again
distracted by fear of loss or
hope of gain. It was wonderful
to be a man, bewildered by
so many flowers, the rush
and ebb of hours, his own
ambiguous gestures—his
whole heart exposed, then
taking cover.

KAY RYAN

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

ago—opposing an assistant professor candidate on the grounds of his noble family background and good looks. Of course this is absolutely untrue. It is hard for me to take it too personally, though, because the poor author doesn't even remember how to spell my name.

THEDA SKOCPOL
Cambridge, Massachusetts

M.P. replies:
Ms. Skocpol, whose name was misspelled by a typesetter, distorts my comments. I did not say that she opposed a candidate because of his noble family background or his good looks but that, in view of these traits, his achievements were "less than they appeared." Hers was an argument against someone comparatively advantaged, which is the reductio ad absurdum of arguments for those comparatively disadvantaged.

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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FLORIDA DIARIST

Legacies

A FEW YEARS AGO, in what was then Washington's most pretentious restaurant, I was served an appetizer called chicken liver mousse. Calculated to break the hearts of Jewish grandmothers everywhere, it consisted of a ramekin's worth of chicken livers whipped into an airy foam and surrounded by brown sauce studded with bits of lobster. I thought at the time that this dish was a sure sign that nouvelle cuisine would soon prove to be a culinary cul-de-sac. I was wrong; since that evening I have had equally elaborate mousses of fruit and game and vegetables. And now nouvelle cuisine has been extended beyond the world of food into the stream of commerce. It was an easy skip from *mousse au chocolat* to Mousse de Jour, a frozen dessert marketed as ice cream. But it took a leap of faith to go from the kitchen to the bathroom, where you can apply styling mousse to your hair. From there, the American marketing machine took over. It gave us mousse shampoo. You can scrub your skin with apricot mousse, wet your whiskers with shaving mousse. And you can grease yourself with tanning mousse. Rows of the skinny cylindrical cans line the shelves of pharmacies in Florida, where other traces of nouvelle cuisine are almost nowhere else in evidence.

HENRY MORRISON FLAGLER built the east coast and south of Florida, transforming swamp into civilization. Given his achievement, it is remarkable how few people outside Florida have heard of him. David Chandler's little-known 1986 biography of Flagler appeared in the same publishing seasons as new biographies of John D. MacArthur and Jay Gould. Although their despicable natures were confirmed, Flagler's case isn't as clear-cut. He amassed his fortune the way a number of other so-called robber barons did; it was Flagler who, after teaming up with John D. Rockefeller in 1867, engineered Standard Oil's monopoly over the petroleum industry. Standard's success, however, didn't hold Flagler's interest for long. During a visit to St. Augustine arranged for his convalescing first wife, he turned his attention permanently to the Florida wilderness. He pressed his railway down the east coast and dispensed his fortune building hotels and churches and public buildings in St. Augustine, Daytona, Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, and Key West.

FLAGLER'S LEGACY can be seen not only in the coquina-and-cement Ponce de León and The Breakers hotel, but in the very fabric of Florida's coastal cities. The recreational paradise that Flagler envisioned and built on slender Palm Beach required a work force of thousands. For them he built West Palm Beach, a poor cousin of a town, many of whose small houses are now boarded up. Miami was claimed mile by mile not only from swamp but from Native Americans and foreigners. Even today Miami's glamour—epitomized by the cool, Quaaludepaced "Miami Vice"—is a superficial cover for a city in ethnic turmoil. Its new wave of Cuban immigrants and drug-related crime is minutely observed and sermonized about in recent books (T. D. Allman's *Miami: City of the Future*, David Rieff's *Going to Miami*) and magazine articles (an excerpt from the Rieff book in the *New Yorker*, Robert Sherrill in the *New York Times Magazine*). The two articles in particular betray more than a hint of xenophobia and align themselves emotionally with Miami's frightened Anglos. It's also interesting to note the cultural strain that occurs between Cuban exiles of the early 1950s—those professionals who fled Cuba before Castro's accession to power with their wealth intact—and Cuban refugees of the 1970s and '80s, many of whom spend their first weeks in America in the INS's Krome Detention Center. The condescension of the landed for the newly arrived Cubans is reminiscent of the condescension of the landed German Jews for the Slavic and Eastern European Jews who came to America a generation or two after them in flight from Hitler. This brand of cultural tension is an important reminder of how quickly in America yesterday's refugees can become tomorrow's gatekeepers. But perhaps the saddest cultural force apparent in modern-day Miami is the unrelieved lack of progress of its urban blacks, even when in seeming economic competition with destitute new arrivals from Cuba, Nicaragua, and elsewhere. The Cuban refugees—who were willing to work for less—quickly replaced blacks in many menial jobs and went on to build Cuban businesses and employ other Cubans. Koreans and Vietnamese have done the same in Los Angeles, New York, Washington, and Philadelphia; the forces and the results—usually violent—are the same. If no longer affirmative action, there is still a role for the government to play in easing the hardships faced by poor urban blacks, and it belongs on the Democratic agenda.

INTEREST IN FLAGLER will be rekindled in the coming months for another of his legacies: his fortune, part of which his third wife inherited. Shortly after Flagler died in 1913, Mary Lily married a Kentucky lawyer (later judge) named Robert Worth Bingham. Eight months later she died of morphine addiction and medical neglect that caused heart failure. Bingham inherited $5 million (another $100 million went to Mary Lily's brother and sisters and a niece), with which he purchased the *Louisville Times* and *Courier-Journal*, the hub of the media empire he later assembled. Family disagreements precipitated the dismantling of that empire last year and spawned scores of articles. Coming soon are at least three books about the Binghams. A fourth, by Flagler's biographer Chandler, was recently withdrawn by Macmillan after Barry Bingham Sr. had his lawyers deliver the publisher a thick document that attempted to refute many of Chandler's claims. Most sensitive of all were his suspicions about Mary's death. Macmillan's withdrawal is particularly unexpected given that the dead cannot be libeled and that the following line appeared on the flap of Chandler's *Henry Flagler*: "As his widow, the world's richest woman, she [Mary] was very probably murdered by her new husband as she changed her will in his favor on her deathbed." It was a Macmillan book; the line was probably written by a Macmillan editor or publicist. And it seems probable that Macmillan encouraged, if not suggested, the Bingham project in the first place. Legal bullying may temporarily shape a reputation, but usually within a generation or two a person's legacy becomes clear.

MARC GRANETZ

Marc Granetz is a lawyer and banker in New York.

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THE PERFECT RECESS

Re·cess (Webster): A break from activity for rest or relaxation.
Re·cess (Parliament): A unique filter for extra smooth taste and low tar enjoyment.

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